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# POEMS

BY

ALFRED TENNYSON,

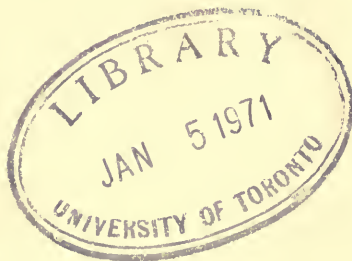
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## CONTENTS.

	Page
IN MEMORIAM . . . . .	I
MAUD, AND OTHER POEMS.	
MAUD . . . . .	125
THE BROOK; AN IDYL . . . . .	181
THE LETTERS . . . . .	189
ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON . . . . .	191
THE DAISY . . . . .	200
TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE . . . . .	204
WILL . . . . .	206
THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE, . . . . .	207
IDYLLS OF THE KING.	
DEDICATION . . . . .	211
ENID . . . . .	213
VIVIEN . . . . .	270
ELAINE . . . . .	296
GUINEVERE . . . . .	341
ADDITIONAL POEMS.	
AYLMER'S FIELD . . . . .	365
SEA DREAMS . . . . .	391
THE GRANDMOTHER . . . . .	401
NORTHERN FARMER . . . . .	408
TITHONUS . . . . .	413
THE VOYAGE . . . . .	416
IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ . . . . .	419
THE FLOWER . . . . .	420
REQUIESCAT . . . . .	421
THE SAILOR-BOY . . . . .	421
THE ISLET . . . . .	422
THE RINGLET . . . . .	424
A WELCOME TO ALEXANDRA . . . . .	426

ODE SUNG AT THE OPENING OF THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION . . . . .	427
A DEDICATION . . . . .	428
THE CAPTAIN; A LEGEND OF THE NAVY . . . . .	429
THREE SONNETS TO A COQUETTE . . . . .	431
ON A MOURNER . . . . .	433
SONG . . . . .	434
SONG . . . . .	435
EXPERIMENTS.	
BOADICEA. . . . .	436
IN QUANTITY . . . . .	441
SPECIMEN OF A TRANSLATION OF THE ILIAD IN BLANK VERSE	443







IN MEMORIAM.



VOL. II. I

A





STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,  
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,  
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,  
Believing where we cannot prove ;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade ;  
Thou madest life in man and brute ;  
Thou madest Death ; and lo, thy foot  
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust :  
Thou madest man, he knows not why ;  
He thinks he was not made to die ;  
And thou hast made him : thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,  
The highest, holiest manhood, thou :  
Our wills are ours, we know not how ;  
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day ;  
They have their day and cease to be :  
They are but broken lights of thee,  
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith : we cannot know ;  
For knowledge is of things we see ;  
And yet we trust it comes from thee,  
A beam in darkness : let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,  
But more of reverence in us dwell ;  
That mind and soul, according well,  
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight ;  
We mock thee when we do not fear :  
But help thy foolish ones to bear ;  
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me ;  
What seem'd my worth since I began ;  
For merit lives from man to man,  
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,  
Thy creature, whom I found so fair.  
I trust he lives in thee, and there  
I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,  
Confusions of a wasted youth ;  
Forgive them where they fail in truth,  
And in thy wisdom make me wise.

former part school, but the departed. Book is in the  
⑧ Jung in "Italian I added to for the" Life ii. 391



IN MEMORIAM

A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII.

I.

⑧  
I HELD it truth, with him who sings  
To one clear harp in divers tones,  
That men may rise on stepping-stones  
x Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years,  
And find in loss a gain to match?  
Or reach a hand thro' time to catch  
The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd,  
Let darkness keep her raven gloss:  
Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,  
To dance with death, to beat the ground,

Than that the victor Hours should scorn  
The long result of love, and boast,  
"Behold the man that loved and lost  
But all he was is overworn."

## II.

OLD Yew, which graspest at the stones  
That name the under-lying dead,  
Thy fibres net the dreamless head,  
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,  
And bring the firstling to the flock ;  
And in the dusk of thee, the clock  
Beats out the little lives of men.

O not for thee the glow, the bloom,  
Who changest not in any gale,  
Nor branding summer suns avail  
To touch thy thousand years of gloom :

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,  
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,  
I seem to fail from out my blood  
And grow incorporate into thee.

## III.

O SORROW, cruel fellowship,  
O Priestess in the vaults of Death,  
O sweet and bitter in a breath,  
What whispers from thy lying lip?

“The stars,” she whispers, “blindly run ;  
A web is wov’n across the sky ;  
From out waste places comes a cry,  
And murmurs from the dying sun :

“And all the phantom, Nature, stands, —  
With all the music in her tone,  
A hollow echo of my own, —  
A hollow form with empty hands.”

And shall I take a thing so blind,  
Embrace her as my natural good ;  
Or crush her, like a vice of blood,  
Upon the threshold of the mind ?

## IV.

To Sleep I give my powers away ;  
My will is bondsman to the dark ;  
I sit within a helmless bark,  
And with my heart I muse and say :

O heart, how fares it with thee now,  
That thou shouldst fail from thy desire,  
Who scarcely darest to inquire,  
“What is it makes me beat so low ?”

Something it is which thou hast lost,  
Some pleasure from thine early years.  
Break, thou deep vase of chilling tears,  
That grief hath shaken into frost !

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross  
All night below the darken'd eyes ;  
With morning wakes the will, and cries,  
“Thou shalt not be the fool of loss.”

## V.

I SOMETIMES hold it half a sin  
    To put in words the grief I feel ;  
    For words, like Nature, half reveal  
And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,  
    A use in measured language lies ;  
    The sad mechanic exercise,  
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,  
    Like coarsest clothes against the cold ;  
    But that large grief which these enfold  
Is given in outline and no more.

## VI.

ONE writes, that " Other friends remain,"  
    That " Loss is common to the race," —  
    And common is the commonplace,  
And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make  
    My own less bitter, rather more :  
    Too common ! Never morning wore  
To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,  
    Who pledgest now thy gallant son ;  
    A shot, ere half thy draught be done,  
Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.



O mother, praying God will save  
Thy sailor, — while thy head is bow'd,  
His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud  
Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought  
At that last hour to please him well ;  
Who mused on all I had to tell,  
And something written, something thought ;

Expecting still his advent home ;  
And ever met him on his way  
With wishes, thinking, here to-day,  
Or here to-morrow will he come.

O somewhere, meek unconscious dove,  
That sittest ranging golden hair ;  
And glad to find thyself so fair,  
Poor child, that waitest for thy love !

For now her father's chimney glows  
In expectation of a guest ;  
And thinking "This will please him best,"  
She takes a riband or a rose ;

For he will see them on to-night ;  
And with the thought her colour burns ;  
And, having left the glass, she turns  
Once more to set a ringlet right ;

And, even when she turn'd, the curse  
Had fallen, and her future lord  
Was drown'd in passing thro' the ford,  
Or kill'd in falling from his horse.

O what to her shall be the end ?  
And what to me remains of good ?  
To her, perpetual maidenhood,  
And unto me no second friend.

## VII.

DARK house, by which once more I stand  
Here in the long unlovely street,  
Doors, where my heart was used to beat  
So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no more, —  
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,  
And like a guilty thing I creep  
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here ; but far away  
The noise of life begins again,  
And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain  
On the bald street breaks the blank day.

## VIII.

A HAPPY lover who has come  
To look on her that loves him well,  
Who 'lights and rings the gateway bell,  
And learns her gone and far from home ;

He saddens, all the magic light  
Dies off at once from bower and hall,  
And all the place is dark, and all  
The chambers emptied of delight :

So find I every pleasant spot  
    In which we two were wont to meet,  
    The field, the chamber, and the street,  
For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there  
    In those deserted walks, may find  
    A flower beat with rain and wind,  
Which once she foster'd up with care ;

So seems it in my deep regret,  
    O my forsaken heart, with thee  
    And this poor flower of poesy  
Which little cared for fades not yet.

But since it pleased a vanish'd eye,  
    I go to plant it on his tomb,  
    That if it can it there may bloom,  
Or dying, there at least may die.

## IX.

FAIR ship, that from the Italian shore  
    Sailest the placid ocean-plains  
    With my lost Arthur's loved remains,  
Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.

So draw him home to those that mourn  
    In vain ; a favorable speed  
    Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead  
Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex  
Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright  
As our pure love, thro' early light  
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above ;  
Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow ;  
Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,  
My friend, the brother of my love ;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see  
Till all my widow'd race be run ;  
Dear as the mother to the son,  
More than my brothers are to me.

## X.

I HEAR the noise about thy keel ;  
I hear the bell struck in the night ;  
I see the cabin-window bright ;  
I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bringest the sailor to his wife,  
And travell'd men from foreign lands ;  
And letters unto trembling hands ;  
And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life.

So bring him : we have idle dreams :  
This look of quiet flatters thus  
Our home-bred fancies : O to us,  
The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,  
That takes the sunshine and the rains,  
Or where the kneeling hamlet drains  
The chalice of the grapes of God ;

Than if with thee the roaring wells  
Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine ;  
And hands so often clasp'd in mine  
Should toss with tangle and with shells.

## XI.

CALM is the morn without a sound,  
Calm 'as to suit a calmer grief,  
And only thro' the faded leaf  
The chestnut pattering to the ground :

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,  
And on these dews that drench the furze,  
And all the silvery gossamers  
That twinkle into green and gold :

Calm and still light on yon great plain  
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,  
And crowded farms and lessening towers,  
To mingle with the bounding main :

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,  
These leaves that redden to the fall ;  
And in my heart, if calm at all,  
If any calm, a calm despair :

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,  
And waves that sway themselves in rest,  
And dead calm in that noble breast  
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

## XII.

Lo, as a dove when up she springs  
To bear thro' Heaven a tale of woe,  
Some dolorous message knit below  
The wild pulsation of her wings ;

Like her I go ; I cannot stay ;  
I leave this mortal ark behind,  
A weight of nerves without a mind,  
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,  
And reach the glow of southern skies,  
And see the sails at distance rise,  
And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying, " Comes he thus, my friend ?  
Is this the end of all my care ?"  
And circle moaning in the air :  
" Is this the end ? Is this the end ?"

And forward dart again, and play  
About the prow, and back return  
To where the body sits, and learn,  
That I have been an hour away.

## XIII.

TEARS of the widower, when he sees  
    A late-lost form that sleep reveals,  
    And moves his doubtful arms, and feels  
Her place is empty, fall like these ;

Which weep a loss forever new,  
    A void where heart on heart reposed ;  
    And, where warm hands have prest and clos'd,  
Silence, till I be silent too.

Which weep the comrade of my choice,  
    An awful thought, a life removed,  
    The human-hearted man I loved,  
A Spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come Time, and teach me, many years,  
    I do not suffer in a dream ;  
    For now so strange do these things seem,  
Mine eyes have leisure for their tears ;

My fancies time to rise on wing,  
    And glance about the approaching sails,  
    As tho' they brought but merchants' bales,  
And not the burthen that they bring.

## XIV.

If one should bring me this report,  
    That thou hadst touch'd the land to-day,  
    And I went down unto the quay,  
And found thee lying in the port ;

And standing, muffled round with woe,  
Should see thy passengers in rank  
Come stepping lightly down the plank,  
And beckoning unto those they know ;

And if along with these should come  
The man I held as half-divine ;  
Should strike a sudden hand in mine,  
And ask a thousand things of home ;

And I should tell him all my pain,  
And how my life had droop'd of late,  
And he should sorrow o'er my state  
And marvel what possess'd my brain ;

And I perceived no touch of change,  
No hint of death in all his frame,  
But found him all in all the same,  
I should not feel it to be strange.

## XV.

TO-NIGHT the winds begin to rise  
And roar from yonder dropping day :  
The last red leaf is whirl'd away,  
The rooks are blown about the skies ;

The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,  
The cattle huddled on the lea ;  
And wildly dash'd on tower and tree  
The sunbeam strikes along the world :



And but for fancies, which aver  
That all thy motions gently pass  
Athwart a plane of molten glass,  
I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud ;  
And but for fear it is not so,  
The wild unrest that lives in woe  
Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,  
And onward drags a laboring breast,  
And topples round the dreary west,  
A looming bastion fringed with fire.

## XVI.

WHAT words are these have fall'n from me ?  
Can calm despair and wild unrest  
Be tenants of a single breast,  
Or sorrow such a changeling be ?

Or doth she only seem to take  
The touch of change in calm or storm ;  
But knows no more of transient form  
In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark  
Hung in the shadow of a heaven ?  
Or has the shock, so harshly given,  
Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,  
And staggers blindly ere she sink ?  
And stunn'd me from my power to think  
And all my knowledge of myself ;

And made me that delirious man  
Whose fancy fuses old and new,  
And flashes into false and true,  
And mingles all without a plan ?

## XVII.

THOU comest, much wept for : such a breeze  
Compell'd thy canvas, and my prayer  
Was as the whisper of an air  
To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move  
Thro' circles of the bounding sky,  
Week after week : the days go by :  
Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou may'st roam,  
My blessing, like a line of light,  
Is on the waters day and night,  
And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars  
Mid-ocean spare thee, sacred bark ;  
And balmy drops in summer dark  
Slide from the bosom of the stars.

So kind an office hath been done,  
Such precious relics brought by thee ;  
The dust of him I shall not see  
Till all my widow'd race be run.

## XVIII.

'T IS well ; 't is something ; we may stand  
Where he in English earth is laid,  
And from his ashes may be made  
The violet of his native land.

'T is little ; but it looks in truth  
As if the quiet bones were blest  
Among familiar names to rest  
And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the head  
That sleeps or wears the mask of sleep,  
And come, whatever loves to weep,  
And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, ev'n yet, if this might be,  
I, falling on his faithful heart,  
Would breathing through his lips impart  
The life that almost dies in me ;

That dies not, but endures with pain,  
And slowly forms the firmer mind,  
Treasuring the look it cannot find,  
The words that are not heard again.

## XIX.

THE Danube to the Severn gave  
The darken'd heart that beat no more ;  
They laid him by the pleasant shore,  
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills ;  
The salt sea-water passes by,  
And hushes half the babbling Wye,  
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,  
And hush'd my deepest grief of all,  
When fill'd with tears that cannot fall,  
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again  
Is vocal in its wooded walls ;  
My deeper anguish also falls,  
And I can speak a little then.

## XX.

THE lesser griefs that may be said,  
That breathe a thousand tender vows,  
Are but as servants in a house  
Where lies the master newly dead ;

Who speak their feeling as it is,  
And weep the fulness from the mind :  
"It will be hard," they say, "to find  
Another service such as this."

My lighter moods are like to these,  
That out of words a comfort win ;  
But there are other griefs within,  
And tears that at their fountain freeze ;

For by the hearth the children sit  
Cold in that atmosphere of Death,  
And scarce endure to draw the breath,  
Or like to noiseless phantoms flit :

But open converse is there none,  
So much the vital spirits sink  
To see the vacant chair, and think,  
“How good ! how kind ! and he is gone.”

## XXI.

I SING to him that rests below,  
And, since the grasses round me wave,  
I take the grasses of the grave,  
And make them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,  
And sometimes harshly will he speak :  
“This fellow would make weakness weak,  
And melt the waxen hearts of men.”

Another answers, “Let him be,  
He loves to make parade of pain,  
That with his piping he may gain  
The praise that comes to constancy.”

A third is wroth, "Is this an hour  
For private sorrow's barren song,  
When more and more the people throng  
The chairs and thrones of civil power?"

"A time to sicken and to swoon,  
When Science reaches forth her arms  
To feel from world to world, and charms  
Her secret from the latest moon?"

Behold, ye speak an idle thing:  
Ye never knew the sacred dust:  
I do but sing because I must,  
And pipe but as the linnets sing:

And one is glad; her note is gay,  
For now her little ones have ranged;  
And one is sad; her note is changed,  
Because her brood is stol'n away.

## XXII.

THE path by which we twain did go,  
Which led by tracts that pleased us well,  
Thro' four sweet years arose and fell,  
From flower to flower, from snow to snow:

And we with singing cheer'd the way,  
And crown'd with all the season lent,  
From April on to April went,  
And glad at heart from May to May:

But where the path we walk'd began  
    To slant the fifth autumnal slope,  
    As we descended, following Hope,  
There sat the Shadow fear'd of man ;

Who broke our fair companionship,  
    And spread his mantle dark and cold,  
    And wrapt thee formless in the fold,  
And dull'd the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see  
    Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste,  
    And think that somewhere in the waste  
The Shadow sits and waits for me.

## XXIII.

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,  
    Or breaking into song by fits,  
    Alone, alone, to where he sits,  
The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,  
    I wander, often falling lame,  
    And looking back to whence I came,  
Or on to where the pathway leads ;

And crying, "How changed from where it ran  
    Thro' lands where not a leaf was dumb ;  
    But all the lavish hills would hum  
The murmur of a happy Pan :

"When each by turns was guide to each,  
 And Fancy light from Fancy caught,  
 And Thought leapt out to wed with Thought  
 Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech ;

"And all we met was fair and good,  
 And all was good that Time could bring,  
 And all the secret of the Spring  
 Moved in the chambers of the blood ;

"And many an old philosophy  
 On Argive heights divinely sang,  
 And round us all the thicket rang  
 To many a flute of Arcady."

## XXIV.

AND was the day of my delight  
 As pure and perfect as I say ?  
 The very source and fount of Day  
 Is dash'd with wandering isles of night.

If all was good and fair we met,  
 This earth had been the Paradise  
 It never look'd to human eyes  
 X Since Adam left his garden yet.

And is it that the haze of grief  
 Makes former gladness loom so great ?  
 The lowness of the present state,  
 That sets the past in this relief ?

X "Since our first sun arose and set." his Reading.



Or that the past will always win  
A glory from its being far ;  
And orb into the perfect star  
We saw not, when we moved therein ?

## XXV.

I KNOW that this was Life, — the track  
Whereon with equal feet we fared ;  
And then, as now, the day prepared  
The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move  
As light as carrier-birds in air ;  
I loved the weight I had to bear,  
Because it needed help of love :

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,  
When mighty Love would cleave in twain  
The lading of a single pain,  
And part it, giving half to him.

## XXVI.

STILL onward winds the dreary way ;  
I with it ; for I long to prove  
No lapse of moons can canker Love,  
Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt  
And goodness, and hath power to see  
Within the green the moulder'd tree,  
And towers fall'n as soon as built, —

O, if indeed that eye foresee  
Or see (in Him is no before)  
In more of life true life no more,  
And Love the indifference to be,

Then might I find, ere yet the morn  
Breaks hither over Indian seas,  
That Shadow waiting with the keys,  
To shroud me from my proper scorn.

## XXVII.

I ENVY not in any moods  
The captive void of noble rage,  
The linnet born within the cage,  
That never knew the summer woods :

I envy not the beast that takes  
His license in the field of time,  
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,  
To whom a conscience never wakes ;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,  
The heart that never plighted troth,  
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth ;  
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall ;  
I feel it, when I sorrow most ;  
'Tis better to have loved and lost  
Than never to have loved at all.

## XXVIII.

THE time draws near the birth of Christ :  
The moon is hid ; the night is still ;  
The Christmas bells from hill to hill  
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,  
From far and near, on mead and moor,  
Swell out and fail, as if a door  
Were shut between me and the sound :

Each voice four changes on the wind,  
That now dilate, and now decrease,  
Peace and good-will, good-will and peace,  
Peace and good-will, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,  
I almost wish'd no more to wake,  
And that my hold on life would break  
Before I heard those bells again :

But they my troubled spirit rule,  
For they controll'd me when a boy ;  
They bring me sorrow touch'd with joy,  
The merry, merry bells of Yule.

## XXIX.

WITH such compelling cause to grieve  
As daily vexes household peace,  
And chains regret to his decease,  
How dare we keep our Christmas-eve ;

Which brings no more a welcome guest  
To enrich the threshold of the night  
With shower'd largess of delight,  
In dance and song and game and jest.

Yet go, and while the holly-boughs  
Entwine the cold baptismal font,  
Make one wreath more for Use and Wont  
That guard the portals of the house ;

Old sisters of a day gone by,  
Gray nurses, loving nothing new ;  
Why should they miss their yearly due  
Before their time ? They too will die.

## XXX.

WITH trembling fingers did we weave  
The holly round the Christmas hearth ;  
A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,  
And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall  
We gamboll'd, making vain pretence  
Of gladness, with an awful sense  
Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused : the winds were in the beech :  
We heard them sweep the winter land ;  
And in a circle hand-in-hand  
Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang ;  
    We sung, tho' every eye was dim,  
    A merry song we sang with him  
Last year : impetuously we sang :

We ceased : a gentler feeling crept  
    Upon us : surely rest is meet :  
    " They rest," we said, " their sleep is sweet,"  
And silence follow'd, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range ;  
    Once more we sang : " They do not die  
    Nor lose their mortal sympathy,  
Nor change to us, although they change ;

" Rapt from the fickle and the frail  
    With gather'd power, yet the same,  
    Pierces the keen seraphic flame  
From orb to orb, from veil to veil."

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,  
    Draw forth the cheerful day from night :  
    O Father, touch the east, and light  
The light that shone when Hope was born.

## XXXI.

WHEN Lazarus left his charnel-cave,  
    And home to Mary's house return'd,  
    Was this demanded, — if he yearn'd  
To hear her weeping by his grave ?

“Where wert thou, brother, those four days?”  
There lives no record of reply,  
Which telling what it is to die  
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbors met,  
The streets were fill'd with joyful sound,  
A solemn gladness even crown'd  
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ !  
The rest remaineth unreveal'd ;  
He told it not ; or something seal'd  
The lips of that Evangelist.

## XXXII.

HER eyes are homes of silent prayer,  
Nor other thought her mind admits  
But, he was dead, and there he sits,  
And he that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede  
All other, when her ardent gaze  
Roves from the living brother's face,  
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,  
Borne down by gladness so complete,  
She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet  
With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful prayers,  
Whose loves in higher love endure ;  
What souls possess themselves so pure,  
Or is there blessedness like theirs ?

## XXXIII.

O THOU that after toil and storm  
Mayst seem to have reach'd a purer air,  
Whose faith has centre everywhere,  
Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister, when she prays,  
Her early Heaven, her happy views ;  
Nor thou with shadow'd hint confuse  
A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,  
Her hands are quicker unto good :  
O, sacred be the flesh and blood  
To which she links a truth divine !

See thou, that countest reason ripe  
In holding by the law within,  
Thou fail not in a world of sin,  
And ev'n for want of such a type.

## XXXIV.

MY own dim life should teach me this,  
That life shall live forevermore,  
Else earth is darkness at the core,  
And dust and ashes all that is ;

This round of green, this orb of flame,  
    Fantastic beauty ; such as lurks  
    In some wild Poet, when he works  
Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I ?  
    'T were hardly worth my while to choose  
    Of things all mortal, or to use  
A little patience ere I die ;

'T were best at once to sink to peace,  
    Like birds the charming serpent draws,  
    To drop head-foremost in the jaws  
Of vacant darkness, and to cease.

## XXXV.

YET if some voice that man could trust  
    Should murmur from the narrow house,  
    " The cheeks drop in ; the body bows ;  
Man dies : nor is there hope in dust " :

Might I not say, " Yet even here,  
    But for one hour, O Love, I strive  
    To keep so sweet a thing alive " ?  
But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,  
    The sound of streams that swift or slow  
    Draw down Æonian hills, and sow  
The dust of continents to be ;



And Love would answer with a sigh,  
    "The sound of that forgetful shore  
    Will change my sweetness more and more,  
Half-dead to know that I shall die."

O me ! what profits it to put  
    An idle case? If Death were seen  
    At first as Death, Love had not been,  
Or been in narrowest working shut,

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,  
    Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape  
    Had bruised the herb and crush'd the grape,  
And bask'd and batten'd in the woods.

## XXXVI.

THO' truths in manhood darkly join,  
    Deep-seated in our mystic frame,  
    We yield all blessing to the name  
Of Him that made them current coin ;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,  
    Where truth in closest words shall fail,  
    When truth embodied in a tale  
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and wrought  
    With human hands the creed of creeds  
    In loveliness of perfect deeds,  
More strong than all poetic thought ;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,  
Or builds the house, or digs the grave,  
And those wild eyes that watch the wave  
In roarings round the coral reef.

## XXXVII.

URANIA speaks with darken'd brow :  
"Thou pratest here where thou art least ;  
This faith has many a purer priest,  
And many an abler voice than thou.

"Go down beside thy native rill,  
On thy Parnassus set thy feet,  
And hear thy laurel whisper sweet  
About the ledges of the hill."

And my Melpomene replies,  
A touch of shame upon her cheek :  
"I am not worthy ev'n to speak  
Of thy prevailing mysteries ;

"For I am but an earthly Muse,  
And owning but a little art  
To lull with song an aching heart,  
And render human love his dues ;

"But brooding on the dear one dead,  
And all he said of things divine,  
(And dear to me as sacred wine  
To dying lips is all he said,)

" I murmur'd, as I came along,  
Of comfort clasp'd in truth reveal'd ;  
And loiter'd in the Master's field,  
And darken'd sanctities with song."

## XXXVIII.

WITH weary steps I loiter on,  
Tho' always under alter'd skies  
The purple from the distance dies,  
My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,  
The herald melodies of spring,  
But in the songs I love to sing  
A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here  
Survive in spirits render'd free,  
Then are these songs I sing of thee  
Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

## XXXIX.

COULD we forget the widow'd hour,  
And look on Spirits breathed away,  
As on a maiden in the day  
When first she wears her orange-flower !

When crown'd with blessing she doth rise  
To take her latest leave of home,  
And hopes and light regrets that come  
Make April of her tender eyes ;

And doubtful joys the father move,  
And tears are on the mother's face,  
As parting with a long embrace  
She enters other realms of love ;

Her office there to rear, to teach, \*  
Becoming, as is meet and fit,  
A link among the days, to knit  
The generations each with each ;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given  
A life that bears immortal fruit  
In such great offices as suit .  
The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern !  
How often shall her old fireside  
Be cheer'd with tidings of the bride,  
How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told,  
And bring her babe, and make her boast,  
Till even those that miss'd her most  
Shall count new things as dear as old :

But thou and I have shaken hands,  
Till growing winters lay me low ;  
My paths are in the fields I know,  
And thine in undiscover'd lands.

## XL.

THY spirit ere our fatal loss  
    Did ever rise from high to higher ;  
    As mounts the heavenward altar-fire,  
As flies the lighter thro' the gross.

But thou art turn'd to something strange,  
    And I have lost the links that bound  
    Thy changes ; here upon the ground,  
No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly ! yet that this could be, —  
    That I could wing my will with might  
    To leap the grades of life and light,  
And flash at once, my friend, to thee :

For tho' my nature rarely yields  
    To that vague fear implied in death ;  
    Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,  
The howlings from forgotten fields ;

Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor  
    An inner trouble I behold,  
    A spectral doubt which makes me cold,  
That I shall be thy mate no more,

Tho' following with an upward mind  
    The wonders that have come to thee,  
    Thro' all the secular to-be,  
But evermore a life behind.

## XLI.

I VEX my heart with fancies dim :  
    He still outstript me in the race ;  
    It was but unity of place  
That made me dream I rank'd with him.

And so may Place retain us still,  
    And he the much-beloved again,  
    A lord of large experience, train  
To riper growth the mind and will :

And what delights can equal those  
    That stir the spirit's inner deeps,  
    When one that loves, but knows not, reaps  
A truth from one that loves and knows ?

## XLII.

IF Sleep and Death be truly one,  
    And every spirit's folded bloom  
    Thro' all its interval gloom  
In some long trance should slumber on ;

Unconscious of the sliding hour,  
    Bare of the body, might it last,  
    And silent traces of the past  
Be all the color of the flower :

So then were nothing lost to man ;  
    So that still garden of the souls  
    In many a figured leaf enrolls  
The total world since life began ;

And love will last as pure and whole  
    As when he loved me here in Time,  
    And at the spiritual prime  
Rewaken with the dawning soul.

## XLIII.

How fares it with the happy dead ?  
    For here the man is more and more ;  
    But he forgets the days before  
God shut the doorways of his head.

The days have vanish'd, tone and tint,  
    And yet perhaps the hoarding sense  
    Gives out at times (he knows not whence)  
A little flash, a mystic hint ;

And in the long harmonious years  
    (If Death so taste Lethean springs)  
    May some dim touch of earthly things  
Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

If such a dreamy touch should fall,  
    O turn thee round, resolve the doubt ;  
    My guardian angel will speak out  
In that high place, and tell thee all.

## XLIV.

THE baby new to earth and sky,  
    What time his tender palm is prest  
    Against the circle of the breast,  
Has never thought that "this is I":

But as he grows he gathers much,  
And learns the use of "I," and "me,"  
And finds "I am not what I see,  
And other than the things I touch."

So rounds he to a separate mind  
From whence clear memory may begin,  
As thro' the frame that binds him in  
His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,  
Which else were fruitless of their due,  
Had man to learn himself anew  
Beyond the second birth of Death.

XLV.

WE ranging down this lower track,  
The path we came by, thorn and flower,  
Is shadow'd by the growing hour,  
Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it : there no shade can last  
In that deep dawn behind the tomb,  
But clear from marge to marge shall bloom  
The eternal landscape of the past :

A lifelong tract of time reveal'd ;  
The fruitful hours of still increase ;  
Days order'd in a wealthy peace,  
And those five years its richest field.



O Love, thy province were not large,  
A bounded field, nor stretching far ;  
Look also, Love, a brooding star,  
A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

## XLVI.

THAT each, who seems a separate whole,  
Should move his rounds, and fusing all  
The skirts of self again, should fall  
Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet :  
Eternal form shall still divide  
The eternal soul from all beside ;  
And I shall know him when we meet :

And we shall sit at endless feast,  
Enjoying each the other's good :  
What vaster dream can hit the mood  
Of Love on earth? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,  
Before the spirits fade away,  
Some landing-place, to clasp and say,  
"Farewell ! We lose ourselves in light."

## XLVII.

IF these brief lays, of Sorrow born,  
Were taken to be such as closed  
Grave doubts and answers here proposed,  
Then these were such as men might scorn :

Her care is not to part and prove ;  
She takes, when harsher moods remit,  
What slender shade of doubt may flit,  
And makes it vassal unto love :

And hence, indeed, she sports with words,  
But better serves a wholesome law,  
And holds it sin and shame to draw  
The deepest measure from the chords :

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,  
But rather loosens from the lip  
Short, swallow-flights of song, that dip  
Their wings in tears, and skim away.

## XLVIII.

FROM art, from nature, from the schools,  
Let random influences glance,  
Like light in many a shiver'd lance  
That breaks about the dappled pools :

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,  
The fancy's tenderest eddy wreath,  
The slightest air of song shall breathe  
To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,  
But blame not thou the winds that make  
The seeming-wanton ripple break,  
The tender-pencil'd shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears,  
Ay me ! the sorrow deepens down,  
Whose muffled motions blindly drown  
The bases of my life in tears.

## XLIX.

BE near me when my light is low,  
When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick  
And tingle ; and the heart is sick,  
And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame  
Is rack'd with pangs that conquer trust ;  
And Time, a maniac scattering dust,  
And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,  
And men the flies of latter spring,  
That lay their eggs, and sting and sing,  
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,  
To point the term of human strife,  
And on the low dark verge of life  
The twilight of eternal day.

## L.

DO we indeed desire the dead  
Should still be near us at our side ?  
Is there no baseness we would hide ?  
No inner vileness that we dread ?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,  
I had such reverence for his blame,  
See with clear eye some hidden shame,  
And I be lessen'd in his love?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue :  
Shall love be blamed for want of faith ?  
There must be wisdom with great Death :  
The dead shall look me thro' and thro'.

Be near us when we climb or fall :  
Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours  
With larger other eyes than ours,  
To make allowance for us all.

## LI.

I CANNOT love thee as I ought,  
For love reflects the thing beloved ;  
My words are only words, and moved  
Upon the topmost froth of thought.

"Yet blame not thou thy plaintive song,"  
The Spirit of true love replied ;  
"Thou canst not move me from thy side,  
Nor human frailty do me wrong.

"What keeps a spirit wholly true  
To that ideal which he bears ?  
What record ? not the sinless years  
That breathed beneath the Syrian blue :

“So fret not, like an idle girl,  
That life is dash'd with flecks of sin.  
Abide : thy wealth is gather'd in,  
When Time hath sunder'd shell from pearl.”

## LII.

How many a father have I seen,  
A sober man, among his boys,  
Whose youth was full of foolish noise,  
Who wears his manhood hale and green :

And dare we to this fancy give,  
That had the wild-oat not been sown,  
The soil, left barren, scarce had grown  
The grain by which a man may live ?

Oh, if we held the doctrine sound  
For life outliving heats of youth,  
Yet who would preach it as a truth  
To those that eddy round and round ?

Hold thou the good : define it well :  
For fear divine Philosophy  
Should push beyond her mark, and be  
Procuress to the Lords of Hell.

## LIII.

OH yet we trust that somehow good  
Will be the final goal of ill,  
To pangs of nature, sins of will,  
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood ;

That nothing walks with aimless feet ;  
That not one life shall be destroy'd,  
Or cast as rubbish to the void,  
When God hath made the pile complete ;

That not a worm is cloven in vain ;  
That not a moth with vain desire  
Is shrivel'd in a fruitless fire,  
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything ;  
I can but trust that good shall fall  
At last — far off — at last, to all,  
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream : but what am I ?  
An infant crying in the night :  
An infant crying for the light :  
And with no language but a cry.

## LIV.

THE wish, that of the living whole  
No life may fail beyond the grave,  
Derives it not from what we have  
The likest God within the soul ?

Are God and Nature then at strife,  
That Nature lends such evil dreams ?  
So careful of the type she seems,  
So careless of the single life ;

That I, considering everywhere  
Her secret meaning in her deeds,  
And finding that of fifty seeds  
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,  
And falling with my weight of cares  
Upon the great world's altar-stairs  
That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,  
And gather dust and chaff, and call  
To what I feel is Lord of all,  
And faintly trust the larger hope.

## LV.

"So careful of the type?" but no.  
From scarped cliff and quarried stone  
She cries, "A thousand types are gone :  
I care for nothing, all shall go.

"Thou makest thine appeal to me :  
I bring to life, I bring to death :  
The spirit does but mean the breath :  
I know no more." And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,  
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,  
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,  
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed  
And love Creation's final law, —  
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw  
With ravin, shriek'd against his creed, —

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,  
Who battled for the True, the Just,  
Be blown about the desert dust,  
Or seal'd within the iron hills?

No more? A monster then, a dream,  
A discord. Dragons of the prime,  
That tare each other in their slime,  
Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail!  
O for thy voice to soothe and bless!  
What hope of answer, or redress?  
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

## LVI.

PEACE; come away: the song of woe  
Is after all an earthly song:  
Peace; come away: we do him wrong  
To sing so wildly: let us go.

Come; let us go: your cheeks are pale;  
But half my life I leave behind:  
Methinks my friend is richly shrined;  
But I shall pass; my work will fail.



Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,  
One set slow bell will seem to toll  
The passing of the sweetest soul  
That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,  
Eternal greetings to the dead ;  
And "Ave, Ave, Ave," said,  
"Adieu, adieu" forevermore.

## LVII.

IN those sad words I took farewell :  
Like echoes in sepulchral halls,  
As drop by drop the water falls  
In vaults and catacombs, they fell ;

And, falling, idly broke the peace  
Of hearts that beat from day to day,  
Half conscious of their dying clay,  
And those cold crypts where they shall cease.

The high Muse answer'd : "Wherefore grieve  
Thy brethren with a fruitless tear ?  
Abide a little longer here,  
And thou shalt take a nobler leave."

## LVIII.

O SORROW, wilt thou live with me,  
No casual mistress, but a wife,  
My bosom-friend and half of life ;  
As I confess it needs must be ;

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,  
Be sometimes lovely like a bride,  
And put thy harsher moods aside,  
If thou wilt have me wise and good.

My centred passion cannot move,  
Nor will it lessen from to-day ;  
But I'll have leave at times to play  
As with the creature of my love ;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,  
With so much hope for years to come,  
That, howsoe'er I know thee, some  
Could hardly tell what name were thine.

## LIX.

HE past ; a soul of nobler tone :  
My spirit loved and loves him yet,  
Like some poor girl whose heart is set  
On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,  
She finds the baseness of her lot,  
Half jealous of she knows not what,  
And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn ;  
She sighs amid her narrow days,  
Moving about the household ways,  
In that dark house where she was born.

The foolish neighbors come and go,  
And tease her till the day draws by :  
At night she weeps, " How vain am I !  
How should he love a thing so low ? "

## LX.

IF, in thy second state sublime,  
Thy ransom'd reason change replies  
With all the circle of the wise,  
The perfect flower of human time ;  
  
And if thou cast thine eyes below,  
How dimly character'd and slight,  
How dwarf'd a growth of cold and night,  
How blanch'd with darkness must I grow !  
  
Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,  
Where thy first form was made a man ;  
I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can  
The soul of Shakespeare love thee more.

## LXI.

THO' if an eye that's downward cast  
Could make thee somewhat blench or fail,  
Then be my love an idle tale,  
And fading legend of the past ;  
  
And thou, as one that once declined  
When he was little more than boy,  
On some unworthy heart with joy,  
But lives to wed an equal mind ;

And breathes a novel world, the while  
His other passion wholly dies,  
Or in the light of deeper eyes  
Is matter for a flying smile.

## LXII.

YET pity for a horse o'er-driven,  
And love in which my hound has part,  
Can hang no weight upon my heart  
In its assumptions up to heaven ;

And I am so much more than these,  
As thou, perchance, art more than I,  
And yet I spare them sympathy,  
And I would set their pains at ease.

So mayst thou watch me where I weep,  
As, unto vaster motions bound,  
The circuits of thine orbit round  
A higher height, a deeper deep.

## LXIII.

DOST thou look back on what hath been,  
As some divinely gifted man,  
Whose life in low estate began  
And on a simple village green ;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,  
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,  
And breasts the blows of circumstance,  
And grapples with his evil star ;

Who makes by force his merit known,  
And lives to clutch the golden keys,  
To mould a mighty state's decrees,  
And shape the whisper of the throne ;

And moving up from high to higher,  
Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope  
The pillar of a people's hope,  
The centre of a world's desire ;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,  
When all his active powers are still,  
A distant dearness in the hill,  
A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,  
While yet beside its vocal springs  
He play'd at counsellors and kings,  
With one that was his earliest mate ;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea  
And reaps the labor of his hands,  
Or in the furrow musing stands :  
“ Does my old friend remember me ? ”

## LXIV.

SWEET soul, do with me as thou wilt ;  
I lull a fancy trouble-tost  
With “ Love's too precious to be lost,  
A little grain shall not be spilt.”

And in that solace can I sing,  
Till out of painful phases wrought  
There flutters up a happy thought,  
Self-balanced on a lightsome wing :

Since we deserved the name of friends,  
And thine effect so lives in me,  
A part of mine may live in thee,  
And move thee on to noble ends.

## LXV.

YOU thought my heart too far diseased ;  
You wonder when my fancies play  
To find me gay among the gay,  
Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crost,  
Which makes a desert in the mind,  
Has made me kindly with my kind,  
And like to him whose sight is lost ;

Whose feet are guided thro' the land,  
Whose jest among his friends is free,  
Who takes the children on his knee,  
And winds their curls about his hand :

He plays with threads, he beats his chair  
For pastime, dreaming of the sky ;  
His inner day can never die,  
His night of loss is always there.

## LXVI.

WHEN on my bed the moonlight falls,  
I know that in thy place of rest,  
By that broad water of the west,  
There comes a glory on the walls :

Thy marble bright in dark appears,  
As slowly steals a silver flame  
Along the letters of thy name,  
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away ;  
From off my bed the moonlight dies ;  
And, closing eaves of wearied eyes,  
I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray :

And then I know the mist is drawn  
A lucid veil from coast to coast,  
And in the dark church, like a ghost,  
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

## LXVII.

WHEN in the down I sink my head,  
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times my breath ;  
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows not Death,  
Nor can I dream of thee as dead :

I walk as ere I walk'd forlorn,  
When all our path was fresh with dew,  
And all the bugle breezes blew  
Reveillée to the breaking morn.

But what is this ? I turn about,  
I find a trouble in thine eye,  
Which makes me sad, I know not why,  
Nor can my dream resolve the doubt :

But ere the lark hath left the lea  
I wake, and I discern the truth ;  
It is the trouble of my youth  
That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

## LXVIII.

I DREAM'D there would be Spring no more,  
That Nature's ancient power was lost :  
The streets were black with smoke and frost,  
They chatter'd trifles at the door :

I wander'd from the noisy town,  
I found a wood with thorny boughs :  
I took the thorns to bind my brows,  
I wore them like a civic crown :

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns  
From youth and babe and hoary hairs :  
They call'd me in the public squares  
The fool that wears a crown of thorns :

They call'd me fool, they call'd me child :  
I found an angel of the night ;  
The voice was low, the look was bright ;  
He look'd upon my crown and smiled :



He reach'd the glory of a hand,  
 That seem'd to touch it into leaf:  
 The voice was not the voice of grief;  
 The words were hard to understand.

LXIX.

I CANNOT see the features right,  
 When on the gloom I strive to paint  
 The face I know ; the hues are faint  
 And mix with hollow masks of night ;

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons wrought,  
 A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,  
 A hand that points, and palled shapes  
 In shadowy thoroughfares of thought ;

And crowds that stream from yawning doors,  
 And shoals of pucker'd faces drive ;  
 Dark bulks that tumble half alive,  
 And lazy lengths on boundless shores :

Till all at once beyond the will  
 I hear a wizard music roll,  
 And thro' a lattice on the soul  
 Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

LXX.

SLEEP, kinsman thou to death and trance  
 And madness, thou hast forged at last  
 A night-long Present of the Past  
 In which we went thro' summer France.

Hadst thou such credit with the soul?  
Then bring an opiate trebly strong,  
Drug down the blindfold sense of wrong  
That so my pleasure may be whole;

While now we talk as once we talk'd  
Of men and minds, the dust of change,  
The days that grow to something strange,  
In walking as of old we walk'd

Beside the river's wooded reach,  
The fortress, and the mountain ridge,  
The cataract flashing from the bridge,  
The breaker breaking on the beach.

## LXXI.

RISEST thou thus, dim dawn, again,  
And howlest, issuing out of night,  
With blasts that blow the poplar white,  
And lash with storm the streaming pane?

Day, when my crown'd estate begun  
To pine in that reverse of doom,  
Which sicken'd every living bloom,  
And blurr'd the splendor of the sun;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour  
With thy quick tears that make the rose  
Pull sideways, and the daisy close  
Her crimson fringes to the shower;

Who might'st have heaved a windless flame  
Up the deep East, or, whispering, play'd  
A chequer-work of beam and shade  
Along the hills, yet look'd the same,

As wan, as chill, as wild as now ;  
Day, mark'd as with some hideous crime  
When the dark hand struck down thro' time,  
And cancell'd nature's best : but thou,

Lift as thou may'st thy burthen'd brows  
Thro' clouds that drench the morning star,  
And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf afar,  
And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound  
Climb thy thick noon, disastrous day ;  
Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,  
And hide thy shame beneath the ground.

## LXXII.

So many worlds, so much to do,  
So little done, such things to be,  
How know I what had need of thee,  
For thou wert strong as thou wert true ?

The fame is quench'd that I foresaw,  
The head hath miss'd an earthly wreath ;  
I curse not nature, no, nor death ;  
For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass ; the path that each man trod  
Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds :  
What fame is left for human deeds  
In endless age ? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,  
Fade wholly, while the soul exults,  
And self-infolds the large results  
Of force that would have forged a name.

## LXXIII.

As sometimes in a dead man's face,  
To those that watch it more and more,  
A likeness, hardly seen before,  
Comes out — to some one of his race :

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold, ·  
I see thee what thou art, and know  
Thy likeness to the wise below,  
Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,  
And what I see I leave unsaid,  
Nor speak it, knowing Death has made  
His darkness beautiful with thee.

## LXXIV.

I LEAVE thy praises unexpress'd  
In verse that brings myself relief,  
And by the measure of my grief  
I leave thy greatness to be guess'd ;

What practice howsoe'er expert  
    In fitting aptest words to things,  
    Or voice the richest-toned that sings,  
Hath power to give thee as thou wert ?

I care not in these fading days  
    To raise a cry that lasts not long,  
    And round thee with the breeze of song  
To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perish'd in the green,  
    And, while we breathe beneath the sun,  
    The world which credits what is done  
Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame ;  
    But somewhere, out of human view,  
    Whate'er thy hands are set to do  
Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

## LXXV.

TAKE wings of fancy, and ascend,  
    And in a moment set thy face  
    Where all the starry heavens of space  
Are sharpen'd to a needle's end ;

Take wings of foresight ; lighten thro'  
    The secular abyss to come,  
    And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb  
Before the mouldering of a yew ;

And if the matin songs, that woke  
The darkness of our planet, last,  
Thine own shall wither in the vast,  
Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these have clothed their branchy bowers  
With fifty Mays, thy songs are vain ;  
And what are they when these remain  
The ruin'd shells of hollow towers ?

## LXXVI.

WHAT hope is here for modern rhyme  
To him who turns a musing eye  
On songs, and deeds, and lives, that lie  
Foreshorten'd in the tract of time ?

These mortal lullabies of pain  
May bind a book, may line a box,  
May serve to curl a maiden's locks ;  
Or when a thousand moons shall wane

A man upon a stall may find,  
And, passing, turn the page that tells  
A grief, then changed to something else,  
Sung by a long-forgotten mind.

But what of that ? My darken'd ways  
Shall ring with music all the same ;  
To breathe my loss is more than fame,  
To utter love more sweet than praise.

## LXXVII.

AGAIN at Christmas did we weave  
The holly round the Christmas hearth ;  
The silent snow possess'd the earth,  
And calmly fell our Christmas-eve :

The yule-clog sparkled keen with frost,  
No wing of wind the region swept,  
But over all things brooding slept  
The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,  
Again our ancient games had place,  
The mimic picture's breathing grace,  
And dance and song and hoodman-blind.

Who show'd a token of distress ?  
No single tear, no mark of pain :  
O sorrow, then can sorrow wane ?  
O grief, can grief be changed to less ?

O last regret, regret can die !  
No, — mixt with all this mystic frame,  
Her deep relations are the same,  
But with long use her tears are dry.

## LXXVIII.

“ MORE than my brothers are to me,” —  
Let this not vex thee, noble heart !  
I know thee of what force thou art  
To hold the costliest love in fee.

But thou and I are one in kind,  
As moulded like in nature's mint ;  
And hill and wood and field did print  
The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd  
Thro' all his eddying coves ; the same  
All winds that roam the twilight came  
In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,  
One lesson from one book we learn'd,  
Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turn'd  
To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,  
But he was rich where I was poor,  
And he supplied my want the more  
As his unlikeness fitted mine.

## LXXIX.

If any vague desire should rise,  
That holy Death ere Arthur died  
Had moved me kindly from his side,  
And dropt the dust on tearless eyes ;

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,  
The grief my loss in him had wrought,  
A grief as deep as life or thought,  
But stay'd in peace with God and man.



I make a picture in the brain ;  
    I hear the sentence that he speaks ;  
    He bears the burthen of the weeks ;  
But turns his burthen into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free ;  
    And, influence-rich to soothe and save,  
    Unused example from the grave  
Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

## LXXX.

COULD I have said while he was here,  
    “ My love shall now no further range ;  
    There cannot come a mellower change,  
For now is love mature in ear.”

Love, then, had hope of richer store :  
    What end is here to my complaint ?  
    This haunting whisper makes me faint,  
“ More years had made me love thee more.”

But Death returns an answer sweet :  
    “ My sudden frost was sudden gain,  
    And gave all ripeness to the grain  
It might have drawn from after-heat.”

## LXXXI.

I WAGE not any feud with Death  
    For changes wrought on form and face ;  
    No lower life that earth's embrace  
May breed with him can fright my faith.

Eternal process moving on,  
From state to state the spirit walks ;  
And these are but the shatter'd stalks,  
Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare  
The use of virtue out of earth :  
I know transplanted human worth  
Will bloom to profit, elsewhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak  
The wrath that garners in my heart ;  
He put our lives so far apart  
We cannot hear each other speak.

## LXXXII.

DIP down upon the northern shore,  
O sweet new-year, delaying long ;  
Thou doest expectant nature wrong ;  
Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,  
Thy sweetness from its proper place ?  
Can trouble live with April days,  
Or sadness in the summer moons ?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,  
The little speedwell's darling blue,  
Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,  
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,  
    Delayest the sorrow in my blood,  
    That longs to burst a frozen bud,  
And flood a fresher throat with song.

## LXXXIII.

WHEN I contemplate all alone  
    The life that had been thine below,  
    And fix my thoughts on all the glow  
To which thy crescent would have grown ;

I see thee sitting crown'd with good,  
    A central warmth diffusing bliss  
    In glance and smile, and clasp and kiss,  
On all the branches of thy blood ;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine ;  
    For now the day was drawing on  
    When thou shouldst link thy life with one  
Of mine own house, and boys of thine

Had babbled "Uncle" on my knee ;  
    But that remorseless iron hour  
    Made cypress of her orange-flower,  
Despair of Hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,  
    To clap their cheeks, to call them mine.  
    I see their unborn faces shine  
Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honor'd guest,  
Thy partner in the flowery walk  
Of letters, genial table-talk,  
Or deep dispute, and graceful jest ;

While now thy prosperous labor fills  
The lips of men with honest praise,  
And sun by sun the happy days  
Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair ;  
And all the train of bounteous hours  
Conduct by paths of growing powers  
To reverence and the silver hair ;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,  
Her lavish mission richly wrought,  
Leaving great legacies of thought,  
Thy spirit should fail from off the globe ;

What time mine own might also flee,  
As link'd with thine in love and fate,  
And, hovering o'er the dolorous strait  
To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrive at last the blessed goal,  
And He that died in Holy Land  
Would reach us out the shining hand,  
And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant ?  
Ah, backward fancy, wherefore wake  
The old bitterness again, and break  
The low beginnings of content ?

## LXXXIV.

THIS truth came borne with bier and pall,  
I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,  
'T is better to have loved and lost,  
Than never to have loved at all —

O true in word, and tried in deed,  
Demanding, so to bring relief  
To this which is our common grief,  
What kind of life is that I lead ;

And whether trust in things above  
Be dimm'd of sorrow, or sustain'd ;  
And whether love for him have drain'd  
My capabilities of love ;

Your words have virtue such as draws  
A faithful answer from the breast,  
Thro' light reproaches, half exprest,  
And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,  
Till on mine ear this message falls,  
That in Vienna's fatal walls  
God's finger touch'd him, and he slept.

The great Intelligences fair  
That range above our mortal state,  
In circle round the blessed gate,  
Received and gave him welcome there ;

And led him thro' the blissful climes,  
And show'd him in the fountain fresh  
All knowledge that the sons of flesh  
Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remain'd, whose hopes were dim,  
Whose life, whose thoughts were little worth,  
To wander on a darken'd earth,  
Where all things round me breathed of him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,  
O heart, with kindest motion warm,  
O sacred essence, other form,  
O solemn ghost, O crowned soul !

Yet none could better know than I,  
How much of act at human hands  
The sense of human will demands,  
By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,  
I felt and feel, tho' left alone,  
His being working in mine own,  
The footsteps of his life in mine ;

A life that all the Muses deck'd  
With gifts of grace, that might express  
All-comprehensive tenderness,  
All-subtilizing intellect :

And so my passion hath not swerved  
To works of weakness, but I find  
An image comforting the mind,  
And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,  
That loved to handle spiritual strife,  
Diffused the shock thro' all my life,  
But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again  
For other friends that once I met ;  
Nor can it suit me to forget  
The mighty hopes that make us men.

I woo your love : I count it crime  
To mourn for any overmuch ;  
I, the divided half of such  
A friendship as had master'd Time ;

Which masters Time indeed, and is  
Eternal, separate from fears :  
The all-assuming months and years  
Can take no part away from this :

But Summer on the steaming floods,  
And Spring that swells the narrow brooks,  
And Autumn, with a noise of rooks,  
That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave  
Recalls, in change of light or gloom,  
My old affection of the tomb,  
And my prime passion in the grave :

My old affection of the tomb,  
A part of stillness, yearns to speak :  
"Arise, and get thee forth and seek"  
A friendship for the years to come.

"I watch thee from the quiet shore ;  
Thy spirit up to mine can reach ;  
But in dear words of human speech  
We two communicate no more."

And I, "Can clouds of nature stain  
The starry clearness of the free ?  
How is it ? Canst thou feel for me  
Some painless sympathy with pain ?"

And lightly does the whisper fall :  
" 'T is hard for thee to fathom this ;  
I triumph in conclusive bliss,  
And that serene result of all."

So hold I commerce with the dead ;  
Or so methinks the dead would say ;  
Or so shall grief with symbols play,  
And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,  
That these things pass, and I shall prove  
A meeting somewhere, love with love,  
I crave your pardon, O my friend ;

If not so fresh, with love as true,  
I, clasping brother-hands, aver  
I could not, if I would, transfer  
The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart  
The promise of the golden hours ?  
First love, first friendship, equal powers,  
That marry with the virgin heart.



Still mine, that cannot but deplore,  
That beats within a lonely place,  
That yet remembers his embrace,  
But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, tho' widow'd, may not rest  
Quite in the love of what is gone,  
But seeks to beat in time with one  
That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,  
Knowing the primrose yet is dear,  
The primrose of the later year,  
As not unlike to that of Spring.

## LXXXV.

SWEET after showers, ambrosial air,  
That rollest from the gorgeous gloom  
Of evening over brake and bloom  
And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below  
Thro' all the dewy-tassell'd wood,  
And shadowing down the horned flood  
In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh  
The full new life that feeds thy breath  
Throughout my frame, till Doubt and Death,  
Ill brethren let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas  
    On leagues of odor streaming far,  
    To where in yonder orient star  
A hundred spirits whisper "Peace."

## LXXXVI.

I PAST beside the reverend walls  
    In which of old I wore the gown ;  
    I roved at random thro' the town,  
And saw the tumult of the halls ;

And heard once more in college fanes  
    The storm their high-built organs make,  
    And thunder-music, rolling, shake  
The prophets blazon'd on the panes ;

And caught once more the distant shout,  
    The measured pulse of racing oars  
    Among the willows ; paced the shores  
And many a bridge, and all about

The same gray flats again, and felt  
    The same, but not the same ; and last  
    Up that long walk of limes I past  
To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door :  
    I linger'd ; all within was noise  
    Of songs, and clapping hands, and boys  
That crash'd the glass and beat the floor ;

Where once we held debate, a band  
Of youthful friends, on mind and art,  
And labor, and the changing mart,  
And all the framework of the land ;

When one would aim an arrow fair,  
But send it slackly from the string ;  
And one would pierce an outer ring,  
And one an inner, here and there ;

And last the master-bowman, he  
Would cleave the mark. A willing ear  
We lent him. Who, but hung to hear  
The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and grace  
And music in the bounds of law,  
To those conclusions when we saw  
The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow  
In azure orbits heavenly-wise ;  
And over those ethereal eyes  
The bar of Michael Angelo.

## LXXXVII.

WILD bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,  
Rings Eden thro' the budded quicks,  
O tell me where the senses mix,  
O tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate : fierce extremes employ  
Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,  
And in the midmost heart of grief  
Thy passion clasps a secret joy :

And I — my harp would prelude woe —  
I cannot all command the strings ;  
The glory of the sum of things  
Will flash along the chords and go.

## LXXXVIII.

WITCH-ELMS that counterchange the floor  
Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright ;  
And thou, with all thy breadth and height  
Of foliage, towering sycamore ;

How often, hither wandering down,  
My Arthur found your shadows fair,  
And shook to all the liberal air  
The dust and din and steam of town :

He brought an eye for all he saw ;  
He mixt in all our simple sports ;  
They pleased him, fresh from brawling courts  
And dusty purlieus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,  
Immantled in ambrosial dark,  
To drink the cooler air, and mark  
The landscape winking thro' the heat :

O sound to rout the brood of cares,  
The sweep of scythe in morning dew,  
The gust that round the garden flew,  
And tumbled half the mellowing pears !

O bliss, when all in circle drawn  
About him, heart and ear were fed  
To hear him, as he lay and read  
The Tuscan poets on the lawn :

Or in the all-golden afternoon  
A guest, or happy sister, sung,  
Or here she brought the harp and flung  
A ballad to the brightening moon :

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,  
Beyond the bounding hill to stray,  
And break the livelong summer day  
With banquet in the distant woods ;

Whereat we glanced from theme to theme,  
Discuss'd the books to love or hate,  
Or touch'd the changes of the state,  
Or threaded some Socratic dream ;

But if I praised the busy town,  
He loved to rail against it still,  
For "ground in yonder social mill,  
We rub each other's angles down,

"And merge," he said, "in form and gloss  
The picturesque of man and man."  
We talk'd : the stream beneath us ran,  
The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,

Or cool'd within the glooming wave ;  
And last, returning from afar,  
Before the crimson-circled star  
Had fall'n into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,  
We heard behind the woodbine veil  
The milk that bubbled in the pail,  
And buzzings of the honeyed hours.

## LXXXIX.

HE tasted love with half his mind,  
Nor ever drank the inviolate spring  
Where nighest heaven, who first could fling  
This bitter seed among mankind ;

That could the dead, whose dying eyes  
Were closed with wail, resume their life,  
They would but find in child and wife  
An iron welcome when they rise :

'T was well, indeed, when warm with wine,  
To pledge them with a kindly tear,  
To talk them o'er, to wish them here,  
To count their memories half divine ;

But if they came who passed away,  
Behold their brides in other hands ;  
The hard heir strides about their lands,  
And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, tho' their sons were none of these,  
Not less the yet-loved sire would make  
Confusion worse than death, and shake  
The pillars of domestic peace.

Ah dear, but come thou back to me :  
Whatever change the years have wrought,  
I find not yet one lonely thought  
That cries against my wish for thee.

## XC.

WHEN rosy plumélets tuft the larch,  
And rarely pipes the mounted thrush ;  
Or underneath the barren bush  
Flits by the sea-blue bird of March ;

Come, wear the form by which I know  
Thy spirit in time among thy peers ;  
The hope of unaccomplish'd years  
Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing change  
May breathe, with many roses sweet,  
Upon the thousand waves of wheat,  
That ripple round the lonely grange ;

Come : not in watches of the night,  
But where the sunbeam broodeth warm,  
Come, beauteous in thine after form,  
And like a finer light in light.

## XCI.

If any vision should reveal  
Thy likeness, I might count it vain,  
As but the canker of the brain ;  
Yea, tho' it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast  
Together in the days behind,  
I might but say, I hear a wind  
Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, tho' it spake and bared to view  
A fact within the coming year ;  
And tho' the months, revolving near,  
Should prove the phantom-warning true,

They might not seem thy prophecies,  
But spiritual presentiments,  
And such refraction of events  
As often rises ere they rise.

## XCII.

I SHALL not see thee. Dare I say  
No spirit ever brake the band  
That stays him from the native land,  
Where first he walk'd when claspt in clay ?

No visual shade of some one lost,  
But he, the Spirit himself, may come  
Where all the nerve of sense is numb ;  
Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.



O, therefore from thy sightless range  
    With gods in unconjectured bliss,  
    O, from the distance of the abyss  
Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter ; hear  
    The wish too strong for words to name ;  
    That in this blindness of the frame  
My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

## XCIII.

How pure at heart and sound in head,  
    With what divine affections bold,  
    Should be the man whose thought would hold  
An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call  
    The spirits from their golden day,  
    Except, like them, thou too canst say,  
My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,  
    Imaginations calm and fair,  
    The memory like a cloudless air,  
The conscience as a sea at rest :

But when the heart is full of din,  
    And doubt beside the portal waits,  
    They can but listen at the gates,  
And hear the household jar within.

## XCIV.

BY night we linger'd on the lawn,  
    For underfoot the herb was dry ;  
    And genial warmth ; and o'er the sky  
The silvery haze of summer drawn ;

And calm that let the tapers burn  
    Unwavering : not a cricket chirr'd :  
    The brook alone far-off was heard,  
And on the board the fluttering urn :

And bats went round in fragrant skies,  
    And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes  
    That haunt the dusk, with ermine capes  
And woolly breasts and beaded eyes ;

While now we sang old songs that peal'd  
    From knoll to knoll, where, couch'd at ease,  
    The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees  
Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,  
    Withdrew themselves from me and night,  
    And in the house light after light  
Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart ; I read  
    Of that glad year that once had been,  
    In those fall'n leaves which kept their green,  
The noble letters of the dead :

And strangely on the silence broke  
    The silent-speaking words, and strange  
    Was love's dumb cry defying change  
To test his worth ; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigor, bold to dwell  
On doubts that drive the coward back,  
And keen thro' wordy snares to track  
Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,  
The dead man touch'd me from the past,  
And all at once it seem'd at last  
His living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in his was wound, and whirl'd  
About empyreal heights of thought,  
And came on that which is, and caught  
The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out  
The steps of Time, the shocks of Chance,  
The blows of Death. At length my trance  
Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with doubt.

Vague words ! but ah, how hard to frame  
In matter-moulded forms of speech,  
Or ev'n for intellect to reach  
Thro' memory that which I became :

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd  
The knoll once more where, couch'd at ease,  
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees  
Laid their dark arms about the field :

And, suck'd from out the distant gloom,  
A breeze began to tremble o'er  
The large leaves of the sycamore,  
And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshlier overhead,  
Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and swung  
The heavy-folded rose, and flung  
The lilies to and fro, and said,

“The dawn, the dawn,” and died away ;  
And East and West, without a breath,  
Mixt their dim lights, like life and death,  
To broaden into boundless day.

## XCV.

YOU say, but with no touch of scorn,  
Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-blue eyes  
Are tender over drowning flies,  
You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not : one indeed I knew  
In many a subtle question versed,  
Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,  
But ever strove to make it true :

Perplext in faith, but pure in deeds,  
At last he beat his music out.  
There lives more faith in honest doubt,  
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gather'd strength,  
He would not make his judgment blind,  
He faced the spectres of the mind .  
And laid them : thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own ;  
    And Power was with him in the night,  
    Which makes the darkness and the light,  
And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,  
    As over Sinai's peaks of old,  
    While Israel made their gods of gold,  
Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

## XCVI.

MY love has talk'd with rocks and trees ;  
    He finds on misty mountain-ground  
    His own vast shadow glory-crown'd ;  
He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life, —  
    I look'd on these, and thought of thee  
    In vastness and in mystery,  
And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two — they dwelt with eye on eye,  
    Their hearts of old have beat in tune,  
    Their meetings made December June,  
Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never past away ;  
    The days she never can forget  
    Are earnest that he loves her yet,  
Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart,  
He loves her yet, she will not weep,  
Tho' rapt in matters dark and deep  
He seems to slight her simple heart.

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,  
He reads the secret of the star,  
He seems so near and yet so far,  
He looks so cold : she thinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,  
A wither'd violet is her bliss ;  
She knows not what his greatness is ;  
For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings  
Of early faith and plighted vows ;  
She knows but matters of the house,  
And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixt and cannot move,  
She darkly feels him great and wise,  
She dwells on him with faithful eyes,  
" I cannot understand : I love."

## XCVII.

YOU leave us : you will see the Rhine,  
And those fair hills I sail'd below,  
When I was there with him ; and go  
By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest breath,  
That City. All her splendor seems  
No livelier than the wisp that gleams  
On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair  
Enwind her isles, unmark'd of me :  
I have not seen, I will not see  
Vienna ; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts  
The birth, the bridal ; friend from friend  
Is oftener parted, fathers bend  
Above more graves, a thousand wants

Gnarr at the heels of men, and prey  
By each cold hearth, and sadness flings  
Her shadow on the blaze of kings :  
And yet myself have heard him say,

That not in any mother town  
With statelier progress to and fro  
The double tides of chariots flow  
By park and suburb under brown

Of lustier leaves ; nor more content,  
He told me, lives in any crowd,  
When all is gay with lamps, and loud  
With sport and song, in booth and tent,

Imperial halls, or open plain ;  
And wheels the circled dance, and breaks  
The rocket molten into flakes  
Of crimson or in emerald rain.

## XCVIII.

RISEST thou thus, dim dawn, again,  
So loud with voices of the birds,  
So thick with lowings of the herds,  
Day, when I lost the flower of men ;

Who tremblest thro' thy darkling red  
On yon swoll'n brook that bubbles fast  
By meadows breathing of the past,  
And woodlands holy to the dead ;

Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves  
A song that slights the coming care,  
And Autumn laying here and there  
A fiery finger on the leaves ;

Who wakenest with thy balmy breath,  
To myriads on the genial earth,  
Memories of bridal, or of birth,  
And unto myriads more, of death.

O, wheresoever those may be,  
Betwixt the slumber of the poles,  
To-day they count as kindred souls ;  
They know me not, but mourn with me.

## XCIX.

I CLIMB the hill : from end to end  
Of all the landscape underneath,  
I find no place that does not breathe  
Some gracious memory of my friend ;



No gray old grange, or lonely fold,  
Or low morass and whispering reed,  
Or simple stile from mead to mead,  
Or sheepwalk up the windy wold ;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw  
That hears the latest linnet trill,  
Nor quarry trench'd along the hill,  
And haunted by the wrangling daw ;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock ;  
Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves  
To left and right thro' meadowy curves,  
That feed the mothers of the flock ;

But each has pleased a kindred eye,  
And each reflects a kindlier day ;  
And, leaving these, to pass away,  
I think once more he seems to die.

## C.

UNWATCH'D, the garden bough shall sway,  
The tender blossom flutter down,  
Unloved, that beech will gather brown,  
This maple burn itself away ;

Unloved, the sun-flower, shining fair,  
Ray round with flames her disk of seed,  
And many a rose-carnation feed  
With summer spice the humming air ;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,  
The brook shall babble down the plain,  
At noon, or when the lesser wain  
Is twisting round the polar star ;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,  
And flood the haunts of fern and crane ;  
Or into silver arrows break  
The sailing moon in creek and cove ;

Till from the garden and the wild  
A fresh association blow,  
And year by year the landscape grow  
Familiar to the stranger's child ;

As year by year the laborer tills  
His wonted glebe, or lops the glades ;  
And year by year our memory fades  
From all the circle of the hills.

## CL.

WE leave the well-beloved place  
Where first we gazed upon the sky ;  
The roofs, that heard our earliest cry  
Will shelter one of stranger race.

We go, but ere we go from home,  
As down the garden-walks I move,  
Two spirits of a diverse love  
Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, here thy boyhood sung  
    Long since its matin song, and heard  
    The low love-language of the bird  
In native hazels tassel-hung.

The other answers, "Yea, but here  
    Thy feet have strayed in after hours  
    With thy lost friend among the bowers,  
And this hath made them trebly dear."

These two have striven half the day,  
    And each prefers his separate claim,  
    Poor rivals in a losing game,  
That will not yield each other way.

I turn to go: my feet are set  
    To leave the pleasant fields and farms;  
    They mix in one another's arms  
To one pure image of regret.

## CII.

ON that last night before we went  
    From out the doors where I was bred,  
    I dream'd a vision of the dead,  
Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,  
    And maidens with me: distant hills  
    From hidden summits fed with rills  
A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.  
They sang of what is wise and good  
And graceful. In the centre stood  
A statue veil'd, to which they sang ;

And which, tho' veil'd, was known to me,  
The shape of him I loved, and love  
Forever : then flew in a dove  
And brought a summons from the sea :

And when they learnt that I must go,  
They wept and wail'd, but led the way  
To where a little shallop lay  
At anchor in the flood below ;

And on by many a level mead,  
And shadowing bluff that made the banks,  
We glided winding under ranks  
Of iris, and the golden reed ;

And still as vaster grew the shore,  
And roll'd the floods in grander space,  
The maidens gather'd strength and grace  
And presence, lordlier than before ;

And I myself, who sat apart  
And watch'd them, wax'd in every limb ;  
I felt the thews of Anakim,  
The pulses of a Titan's heart ;

As one would sing the death of war,  
And one would chant the history  
Of that great race, which is to be,  
And one the shaping of a star ;

Until the forward-creeping tides  
    Began to foam, and we to draw,  
    From deep to deep, to where we saw  
A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck,  
    But thrice as large as man he bent  
    To greet us. Up the side I went,  
And fell in silence on his neck :

Whereat those maidens with one mind  
    Bewail'd their lot ; I did them wrong :  
    " We served thee here," they said, " so long,  
And wilt thou leave us now behind ? "

So rapt I was, they could not win  
    An answer from my lips, but he  
    Replying, " Enter likewise ye  
And go with us : " they enter'd in.

And while the wind began to sweep  
    A music out of sheet and shroud,  
    We steer'd her toward a crimson cloud  
That landlike slept along the deep.

## CIII.

THE time draws near the birth of Christ ;  
    The moon is hid, the night is still ;  
    A single church below the hill  
Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,  
That wakens at this hour of rest  
A single murmur in the breast,  
That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,  
In lands where not a memory strays,  
Nor landmark breathes of other days,  
But all is new unhallow'd ground.

## CIV.

THIS holly by the cottage-eave,  
To-night, ungather'd, shall it stand :  
We live within the stranger's land,  
And strangely falls our Christmas eve.

Our father's dust is left alone  
And silent under other snows :  
There in due time the woodbine blows,  
The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse  
The genial hour with mask and mime ;  
For change of place, like growth of time,  
Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,  
By which our lives are chiefly proved,  
A little spare the night I loved,  
And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,  
Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm ;  
For who would keep an ancient form  
Thro' which the spirit breathes no more ?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast ;  
Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be blown ;  
No dance, no motion, save alone  
What lightens in the lucid east

Of rising worlds by yonder wood.  
Long sleeps the summer in the seed ;  
Run out your measured arcs, and lead  
The closing cycle rich in good.

## CV.

RING out wild bells to the wild sky,  
The flying cloud, the frosty light :  
The year is dying in the night ;  
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring, happy bells, across the snow :  
The year is going, let him go ;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,  
For those that here we see no more ;  
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
And ancient forms of party strife ;  
Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,  
The faithless coldness of the times ;  
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,  
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
The civic slander and the spite ;  
Ring in the love of truth and right,  
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease ;  
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold ;  
Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier hand ;  
Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

## CVI.

It is the day when he was born,  
A bitter day that early sank  
Behind a purple-frosty bank  
Of vapour, leaving night forlorn.



The time admits not flowers or leaves  
To deck the banquet. Fiercely flies  
The blast of North and East, and ice  
Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns  
To yon hard crescent, as she hangs  
Above the wood which grides and clangs  
Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass  
To darken on the rolling brine  
That breaks the coast. But fetch the wine,  
Arrange the board and brim the glass ;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,  
To make a solid core of heat ;  
Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat  
Of all things ev'n as he were by ;

We keep the day. With festal cheer,  
With books and music, surely we  
Will drink to him whate'er he be,  
And sing the songs he loved to hear.

## CVII.

I WILL not shut me from my kind,  
And, lest I stiffen into stone,  
I will not eat my heart alone,  
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind :

What profit lies in barren faith,  
And vacant yearning, tho' with might  
To scale the heaven's highest height,  
Or dive below the wells of Death?

What find I in the highest place,  
But mine own phantom chanting hymns?  
And on the depths of death there swims  
The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be  
Of sorrow under human skies:  
'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise,  
Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

## CVIII.

HEART-AFFLUENCE in discursive talk  
From household fountains never dry;  
The critic clearness of an eye,  
That saw thro' all the Muses' walk;

Seraphic intellect and force  
To seize and throw the doubts of man;  
Impassion'd logic, which outran  
The hearer in its fiery course;

High nature amorous of the good,  
But touch'd with no ascetic gloom;  
And passion pure in snowy bloom  
Thro' all the years of April blood;

Mr Gladstone fixed on this as the subject of his speech at the meeting  
image of Arthur Hallam C.VIII & CXXVIII : Mr Gladstone

IN MEMORIAM.

99

A love of freedom rarely felt,  
Of freedom in her regal seat  
Of England ; not the schoolboy heat,  
The blind hysterics of the Celt ;

And manhood fused with female grace  
In such a sort, the child would twine  
A trustful hand, unask'd, in thine,  
And find his comfort in thy face ;

All these have been, and thee mine eyes  
Have look'd on : if they look'd in vain,  
My shame is greater who remain,  
Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

CIX.

THY converse drew us with delight,  
The men of rathe and riper years :  
The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,  
Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,  
The proud was half disarm'd of pride,  
Nor cared the serpent at thy side  
To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert by,  
The flippant put himself to school  
And heard thee, and the brazen fool  
Was soften'd, and he knew not why ;

While I, thy dearest, sat apart,  
And felt thy triumph was as mine ;  
And loved them more, that they were thine,  
The graceful tact, the Christian art ;

Not mine the sweetness or the skill  
But mine the love that will not tire,  
And, born of love, the vague desire  
That spurs an imitative will.

## CX.

THE churl in spirit, up or down  
Along the scale of ranks, thro' all,  
To him who grasps a golden ball,  
By blood a king, at heart a clown ;

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil  
His want in forms for fashion's sake,  
Will let his coltish nature break  
At seasons thro' the gilded pale :

For who can always act ? but he,  
To whom a thousand memories call,  
Not being less but more than all  
The gentleness he seem'd to be,

Best seem'd the thing he was, and join'd  
Each office of the social hour  
To noble manners, as the flower  
And native growth of noble mind ;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,  
Or villain fancy fleeting by,  
Drew in the expression of an eye,  
Where God and Nature met in light ;

And thus he bore without abuse,  
The grand old name of gentleman,  
Defamed by every charlatan,  
And soil'd with all ignoble use.

## CXI.

HIGH wisdom holds my wisdom less,  
That I, who gaze with temperate eyes  
On glorious insufficiencies,  
Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room  
Of all my love, art reason why  
I seem to cast a careless eye  
On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou ? some novel power  
Sprang up forever at a touch,  
And hope could never hope too much,  
In watching thee from hour to hour,

Large elements in order brought,  
And tracts of calm from tempest made,  
And world-wide fluctuation sway'd  
In vassal tides that follow'd thought.

## CXII.

'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise ;  
Yet how much wisdom sleeps with thee  
Which not alone had guided me,  
But served the seasons that may rise ;

For can I doubt who knew thee keen  
In intellect, with force and skill  
To strive, to fashion, to fulfil —  
I doubt not what thou wouldst have been :

A life in civic action warm,  
A soul on highest mission sent,  
A potent voice of Parliament,  
A pillar steadfast in the storm,

Should licensed boldness gather force,  
Becoming, when the time has birth,  
A lever to uplift the earth  
And roll it in another course,

With thousand shocks that come and go,  
With agonies, with energies,  
With overthrowings, and with cries,  
And undulations to and fro.

## CXIII.

WHO loves not Knowledge? Who shall rail  
Against her beauty? May she mix  
With men and prosper! Who shall fix  
Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire :  
    She sets her forward countenance  
    And leaps into the future chance,  
Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain,  
    She cannot fight the fear of death.  
    What is she, cut from love and faith,  
But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of Demons ? fiery-hot to burst  
    All barriers in her onward race  
    For power. Let her know her place ;  
She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,  
    If all be not in vain ; and guide  
    Her footsteps, moving side by side  
With wisdom, like the younger child :

For she is earthly of the mind,  
    But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.  
    O friend, who camest to thy goal  
So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee,  
    Who grewest not alone in power  
    And knowledge, but by year and hour  
In reverence and in charity.

## CXIV.

Now fades the last long streak of snow,  
Now bourgeons every maze of quick  
About the flowering squares, and thick  
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,  
The distance takes a lovelier hue,  
And drown'd in yonder living blue  
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,  
The flocks are whiter down the vale,  
And milkier every milky sail  
On winding stream or distant sea ;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives  
In yonder greening gleam, and fly  
The happy birds, that change their sky  
To build and brood ; that live their lives

From land to land ; and in my breast  
Spring wakens too ; and my regret  
Becomes an April violet,  
And buds and blossoms like the rest.

## CXV.

Is it, then, regret for buried time  
That keenlier in sweet April wakes,  
And meets the year, and gives and takes  
The colors of the crescent prime?



Not all : the songs, the stirring air,  
The life re-orient out of dust,  
Cry thro' the sense to hearten trust  
In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret : the face will shine  
Upon me, while I muse alone ;  
And that dear voice I once have known  
Still speak to me of me and mine :

Yet less of sorrow lives in me  
For days of happy commune dead ;  
Less yearning for the friendship fled,  
Than some strong bond which is to be.

## CXVI.

O DAYS and hours, your work is this,  
To hold me from my proper place,  
A little while from his embrace,  
For fuller gain of after bliss ;

That out of distance might ensue  
Desire of nearness doubly sweet ;  
And unto meeting when we meet,  
Delight a hundred-fold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,  
And every span of shade that steals,  
And every kiss of toothed wheels,  
And all the courses of the suns.

## CXVII.

CONTEMPLATE all this work of Time,  
The giant laboring in his youth ;  
Nor dream of human love and truth,  
As dying Nature's earth and lime ;

But trust that those we call the dead  
Are breathers of an ampler day,  
Forever nobler ends. They say,  
The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,  
And grew to seeming-random forms,  
The seeming prey of cyclic storms,  
Till at the last arose the man ;

Who throve and branch'd from clime to clime,  
The herald of a higher race,  
And of himself in higher place  
If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more ;  
Or, crown'd with attributes of woe  
Like glories, move his course, and show  
That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,  
And heated hot with burning fears,  
And dipt in baths of hissing tears,  
And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly  
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast ;  
Move upward, working out the beast,  
And let the ape and tiger die.

## CXVIII.

DOORS, where my heart was used to beat  
So quickly, not as one that weeps  
I come once more ; the city sleeps ;  
I smell the meadow in the street ;

I hear a chirp of birds ; I see  
Betwixt the black fronts long-withdrawn  
A light-blue lane of early dawn,  
And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland,  
And bright the friendship of thine eye ;  
And in my thoughts with scarce a sigh  
I take the pressure of thine hand.

## CXIX.

I TRUST I have not wasted breath :  
I think we are not wholly brain,  
Magnetic mockeries ; not in vain,  
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with Death ;

Not only cunning casts in clay :  
Let Science prove we are, and then  
What matters Science unto men,  
At least to me ? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs  
Hereafter, up from childhood shape  
His action like the greater ape,  
But I was born to other things.

## CXX.

SAD Hesper o'er the buried sun,  
And ready, thou, to die with him,  
Thou watchest all things ever dim  
And dimmer, and a glory done :

The team is loosen'd from the wain,  
The boat is drawn upon the shore ;  
Thou listenest to the closing door,  
And life is darken'd in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,  
By thee the world's great work is heard  
Beginning, and the wakeful bird :  
Behind thee comes the greater light ;

The market boat is on the stream,  
And voices hail it from the brink ;  
Thou hear'st the village hammer clink,  
And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name  
For what is one, the first, the last,  
Thou, like my present and my past,  
Thy place is changed ; thou art the same.

## CXXI.

OH, wast thou with me, dearest, then,  
While I rose up against my doom,  
And yearn'd to burst the folded gloom,  
To bare the eternal Heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,  
The strong imagination roll  
A sphere of stars about my soul,  
In all her motion one with law.

If thou wert with me, and the grave  
Divide us not, be with me now,  
And enter in at breast and brow,  
Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quicken'd with a livelier breath,  
And like an inconsiderate boy,  
As in the former flash of joy,  
I slip the thoughts of life and death :

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,  
And every dew-drop paints a bow,  
The wizard lightnings deeply glow,  
And every thought breaks out a rose.

## CXXII.

THERE rolls the deep where grew the tree.  
O earth, what changes thou hast seen !  
There where the long street roars, hath been  
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow  
From form to form, and nothing stands ;  
They melt like mist, the solid lands,  
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,  
And dream my dream, and hold it true ;  
For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,  
I cannot think the thing farewell.

## CXXIII.

THAT which we dare invoke to bless ;  
Our dearest faith ; our ghastliest doubt ;  
He, They, One, All ; within, without ;  
The Power in darkness whom we guess ;

I found Him not in world or sun,  
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye ;  
Nor thro' the questions men may try,  
The petty cobwebs we have spun :

If e'er, when faith had fall'n asleep,  
I heard a voice, " Believe no more,"  
And heard an ever-breaking shore  
That tumbled in the Godless deep ;

A warmth within the breast would melt  
The freezing reason's colder part,  
And like a man in wrath the heart  
Stood up and answer'd, " I have felt."

No, like a child in doubt and fear :  
But that blind clamor made me wise ;  
Then was I as a child that cries,  
But, crying, knows his father near ;

And what I am beheld again  
    What is, and no man understands ;  
    And out of darkness came the hands  
That reach thro' nature, moulding men.

## CXXIV.

WHATEVER I have said or sung,  
    Some bitter notes my harp would give,  
    Yea, tho' there often seem'd to live  
A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth ;  
    She did but look thro' dimmer eyes ;  
    Or Love but play'd with gracious lies  
Because he felt so fix'd in truth :

And if the song were full of care,  
    He breathed the spirit of the song ;  
    And if the words were sweet and strong,  
He set his royal signet there ;

Abiding with me till I sail  
    To seek thee on the mystic deeps,  
    And this electric force, that keeps  
A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

## CXXV.

LOVE is and was my Lord and King,  
    And in his presence I attend  
    To hear the tidings of my friend,  
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my King and Lord,  
And will be, tho' as yet I keep  
Within his court on earth, and sleep  
Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel  
Who moves about from place to place,  
And whispers to the worlds of space,  
In the deep night, that all is well.

## CXXVI.

AND all is well, tho' faith and form  
Be sunder'd in the night of fear ;  
Well roars the storm to those that hear  
A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,  
And justice, ev'n tho' thrice again  
The red fool-fury of the Seine  
Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,  
And him, the lazar, in his rags :  
They tremble, the sustaining crags ;  
The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood ;  
The fortress crashes from on high,  
The brute earth lightens to the sky,  
And the great Æon sinks in blood,



And compass'd by the fires of Hell ;  
While thou, dear spirit, happy star,  
O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,  
And smilest, knowing all is well.

## CXXVII.

THE love that rose on stronger wings,  
Unpalsied when we met with Death,  
Is comrade of the lesser faith  
That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood  
Of onward time shall yet be made,  
And throned races may degrade ;  
Yet, O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and Fear,  
If all your office had to do  
With old results that look like new ;  
If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,  
To fool the crowd with glorious lies,  
To cleave a creed in sects and cries,  
To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,  
To cramp the student at his desk,  
To make old bareness picturesque  
And tuft with grass a feudal tower ;

Why then my scorn might well descend  
On you and yours. I see in part  
That all, as in some piece of art,  
Is toil coöperant to an end.

## CXXVIII.

'DEAR friend, far off, my lost desire,  
So far, so near in woe and weal ;  
O loved the most, when most I feel  
There is a lower and a higher ;

Known and unknown ; human, divine ;  
Sweet human hand and lips and eye ;  
Dear heavenly friend that canst not die,  
Mine, mine, forever, ever mine ;

Strange friend, past, present, and to be ;  
Love deeper, darker understood ;  
Behold, I dream a dream of good,  
And mingle all the world with thee.

## CXXIX.

THY voice is on the rolling air ;  
I hear thee where the waters run ;  
Thou standest in the rising sun,  
And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then ? I cannot guess ;  
But tho' I seem in star and flower  
To feel thee some diffusive power,  
I do not therefore love thee less :

My love involves the love before ;  
My love is vaster, passion now ;  
Tho' mix'd with God and Nature thou,  
I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh ;  
I have thee still, and I rejoice ;  
I prosper, circled with thy voice ;  
I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

## CXXX.

O LIVING will that shalt endure  
When all that seems shall suffer shock,  
Rise in the spiritual rock,  
Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust  
A voice as unto him that hears,  
A cry above the conquer'd years  
To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,  
The truths that never can be proved  
Until we close with all we loved,  
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

116

IN MEMORIAM.

Which makes appear the songs I made  
As echoes out of weaker times,  
As half but idle brawling rhymes,  
The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,  
That must be made a wife ere noon?  
She enters, glowing like the moon  
Of Eden on its bridal bower :

On me she bends her blissful eyes,  
And then on thee ; they meet thy look  
And brighten like the star that shook  
Betwixt the palms of paradise.

O when her life was yet in bud,  
He too foretold the perfect rose.  
For thee she grew, for thee she grows  
Forever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy ; full of power ;  
As gentle ; liberal-minded, great,  
Consistent ; wearing all that weight  
Of learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out : the noon is near,  
And I must give away the bride ;  
She fears not, or with thee beside  
And me behind her, will not fear :

For I that danced her on my knee,  
That watch'd her on her nurse's arm,  
That shielded all her life from harm,  
At last must part with her to thee ;

Now waiting to be made a wife,  
Her feet, my darling, on the dead ;  
Their pensive tablets round her head,  
And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,  
The "wilt thou" answer'd, and again  
The "wilt thou" ask'd, till out of twain  
Her sweet "I will" has made ye one.

Now sign your names, which shall be read,  
Mute symbols of a joyful morn,  
By village eyes as yet unborn ;  
The names are sign'd, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells  
The joy to every wandering breeze ;  
The blind wall rocks, and on the trees  
The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour, and happier hours  
Await them. Many a merry face  
Salutes them — maidens of the place,  
That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

O happy hour, behold the bride  
With him to whom her hand I gave.  
They leave the porch, they pass the grave  
That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,  
For them the light of life increased,  
Who stay to share the morning feast,  
Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance  
To meet and greet a whiter sun ;  
My drooping memory will not shun  
The foaming grape of eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,  
And hearts are warm'd, and faces bloom,  
As drinking health to bride and groom  
We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I  
Conjecture of a stiller guest,  
Perchance, perchance, among the rest,  
And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,  
And those white-favor'd horses wait ;  
They rise, but linger ; it is late ;  
Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark  
From little cloudlets on the grass,  
But sweeps away as out we pass  
To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,  
And talk of others that are wed,  
And how she look'd, and what he said,  
And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,  
The shade of passing thought, the wealth  
Of words and wit, the double health,  
The crowning cup, the three-times-three,

And last the dance ; — till I retire :  
Dumb is that tower which spake so loud,  
And high in heaven the streaming cloud,  
And on the downs a rising fire :

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,  
Till over down and over dale  
All night the shining vapor sail  
And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,  
And catch at every mountain head,  
And o'er the friths that branch and spread  
Their sleeping silver thro' the hills ;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,  
With tender gloom the roof, the wall ;  
And breaking let the splendor fall  
To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,  
And, star and system rolling past,  
A soul shall draw from out the vast  
And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved thro' life of lower phase,  
Result in man, be born and think,  
And act and love, a closer link  
Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look  
On knowledge ; under whose command  
Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand  
Is Nature like an open book ;

No longer half-akin to brute,  
For all we thought and loved and did,  
And hoped, and suffer'd, is but seed  
Of what in them is flower and fruit ;



Whereof the man, that with me trod  
This planet, was a noble type  
Appearing ere the times were ripe,  
That friend of mine who lives in God,

That God, which ever livés and loves,  
One God, one law, one element,  
And one far-off divine event,  
To which the whole creation moves.





" I find Maud takes a good deal of trouble to understand  
 " is hardly worth understanding. It has many practical beauties  
 " against them are left to strange & nearly practical persons who  
 " have : who : can hardly tell whether he means to be  
 " for sense or savings." Gladstone in Maud's life ii. 18  
Aug 30: 1859



# MAUD,

AND OTHER POEMS.







## M A U D .

I.

I.

*spiteful tone*  
I HATE the dreadful hollow behind the little wood,  
Its lips in the field above are dabbled with blood-  
red heath, *⇒ flowers associated with death* -  
The red-ribb'd ledges drip with a silent horror of blood,  
And Echo there, whatever is ask'd her, answers 'Death.'

2.

For there in the ghastly pit long since a body was found,  
His who had given me life — O father ! O God ! was  
it well ? —  
Mangled, and flatten'd, and crush'd, and dinted into the  
ground :  
There yet lies the rock that fell with him when he fell.

3.

Did he fling himself down ? who knows ? for a vast  
speculation had fail'd,  
And ever he mutter'd and madden'd, and ever wann'd  
with despair,

And out he walk'd when the wind like a broken world-  
 ling wail'd,  
 And the flying gold of the ruin'd woodlands drove thro'  
 the air.

## 4.

I remember the time, for the roots of my hair were  
 stirr'd  
 By a shuffled step, by a dead weight trail'd, by a whis-  
 per'd fright,  
 And my pulses closed their gates with a shock on my  
 heart as I heard  
 The shrill-edged shriek of a mother divide the shudder-  
 ing night. *diest*

## 5.

Villany somewhere ! whose ? One says, we are villains  
 all.  
 Not he : his honest fame should at least by me be  
 maintain'd :  
 But that old man, now lord of the broad estate and the  
 Hall,  
 Dropt off gorged from a scheme that had left us flaccid  
 and drain'd.

## 6.

*Chatter*  
 Why do they prate of the blessings of Peace ? we have  
 made them a curse,  
 Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all that is not its  
 own ;  
 And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain, is it better or  
 worse  
 Than the heart of the citizen hissing in war on his own  
 hearthstone ?

## 7.

But these are the days of advance, the works of the men  
 of mind,  
 When who but a fool would have faith in a tradesman's  
 ware or his word?  
 Is it peace or war? Civil war, as I think, and that of a  
 kind  
 The viler, as underhand, not openly bearing the sword.

*shamed*

## 8.

Sooner or later I too may passively take the print  
 Of the golden age — why not? I have neither hope nor  
 trust;  
 May make my heart as a millstone, set my face as a flint,  
 Cheat and be cheated, and die: who knows? we are  
 ashes and dust.

## 9.

Peace sitting under her olive, and slurring the days  
 gone by,  
 When the poor are hovell'd and hustled together, each  
 sex, like swine,  
 When only the ledger lives, and when only not all men  
 lie;  
 Peace in her vineyard — yes! — but a company forges  
 the wine.

## 10.

And the vitriol madness flushes up in the ruffian's head,  
 Till the filthy by-lane rings to the yell of the trampled  
 wife,  
 While chalk and alum and plaster are sold to the poor  
 for bread,  
 And the spirit of murder works in the very means of life.

## 11.

And Sleep must lie down arm'd, for the villanous centre-bits  
 Grind on the wakeful ear in the hush of the moonless  
 nights,  
 While another is cheating the sick of a few last gasps,  
 as he sits  
 To pestle a poison'd poison behind his crimson lights.

## 12.

*pound*  
 When a Mammonite mother kills her babe for a burial  
 fee,  
 And Timour-Mammon grins on a pile of children's  
 bones,  
 Is it peace or war? better, war! loud war by land and  
 by sea,  
 War with a thousand battles, and shaking a hundred  
 thrones.

## 13.

For I trust if an enemy's fleet came yonder round by  
 the hill,  
 And the rushing battle-bolt sang from the three-decker  
 out of the foam,  
 That the smoothfaced snubnosed rogue would leap from  
 his counter and till,  
 And strike, if he could, were it but with his cheating  
 yardwand, home. —

## 14.

What! am I raging alone as my father raged in his  
 mood?  
 Must I too creep to the hollow and dash myself down  
 and die



Rather than hold by the law that I made, nevermore  
to brood  
On a horror of shatter'd limbs and a wretched swin-  
dler's lie ?

15.

Would there be sorrow for *me* ? there was *love* in the  
passionate shriek,  
Love for the silent thing that had made false haste to  
the grave —  
Wrapt in a cloak, as I saw him, and thought he would  
rise and speak  
And rave at the lie and the liar, ah God, as he used to  
rave.

16.

I am sick of the Hall and the hill, I am sick of the  
moor and the main.  
Why should I stay ? can a sweeter chance ever come to  
me here ?  
O, having the nerves of motion as well as the nerves of  
pain,  
Were it not wise if I fled from the place and the pit and  
the fear ?

17.

There are workmen up at the Hall : they are coming  
back from abroad ;  
The dark old place will be gilt by the touch of a mil-  
lionnaire :  
I have heard, I know not whence, of the singular  
beauty of Maud ;  
I play'd with the girl when a child ; she promised then  
to be fair.

18.

Maud with her venturous climbings and tumbles and  
 childish escapes,  
 Maud the delight of the village, the ringing joy of the  
 Hall,  
 Maud with her sweet purse-mouth when my father  
 dangled the grapes,  
 Maud the beloved of my mother, the moon-faced dar-  
 ling of all, —

19.

What is she now? My dreams are bad. She may  
 bring me a curse.

No, there is fatter game on the moor; she will let me  
 alone.

*her brother*

Thanks, for the fiend best knows whether woman or  
 man be the worse.

I will bury myself in my books, and the Devil may pipe  
 to his own.

*self"*  
*at reading*

II.

LONG have I sigh'd for a calm : God grant I may find  
 it at last !

It will never be broken by Maud, she has neither savor  
 nor salt,

But a cold and clear-cut face, as I found when her car-  
 riage past,

Perfectly beautiful : let it be granted her : where is the  
 fault ?

All that I saw (for her eyes were downcast, not to be  
 seen)

*first  
 sight  
 of  
 Maud*

Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null,  
 Dead perfection, no more ; nothing more, if it had not  
 been  
 For a chance of travel, a paleness, an hour's defect of  
 the rose,  
 Or an underlip, you may call it a little too ripe, too full,  
 Or the least little delicate aquiline curve in a sensitive  
 nose,  
 From which I escaped heart-free, with the least little  
 touch of spleen.

## III.

COLD and clear-cut face, why come you so cruelly  
 meek, *sleep*  
 Breaking a slumber in which all spleenful, *ill tempered* folly was  
 drown'd,  
 Pale with the golden beam of an eyelash dead on the  
 cheek,  
 Passionless, pale, cold face, star-sweet on a gloom  
 profound ;  
 Womanlike, taking revenge too deep for a transient  
 wrong  
 Done but in thought to your beauty, and ever as pale  
 as before  
 Growing and fading and growing upon me without a  
 sound,  
 Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, deathlike, half the night  
 long  
 Growing and fading and growing, till I could bear it  
 no more,

But arose, and all by myself in my own dark garden  
 ground,  
 Listening now to the tide in its broad-flung shipwreck-  
 ing roar,  
 Now to the scream of a madden'd beach dragg'd down  
 by the wave,  
 Walk'd in a wintry wind by a ghastly glimmer, and  
 found  
 The shining daffodil dead, and Orion low in his grave.

*vision of the night.*  
*Hunter with belt & sword.*  
*spring that doesn't bring life to land.*

## IV.

## I.

A MILLION emeralds break from the ruby-budded lime  
 In the little grove where I sit — ah, wherefore cannot  
 I be  
 Like things of the season gay, like the bountiful season  
 bland,  
 When the far-off sail is blown by the breeze of a softer  
 clime,  
 Half-lost in the liquid azure bloom of a crescent of  
 sea,  
 The silent sapphire-spangled marriage ring of the  
 land?

## 2.

Below me, there, is the village, and looks how quiet  
 and small!  
 And yet bubbles o'er like a city, with gossip, scandal,  
 and spite;  
 And Jack on his alehouse bench has as many lies as a  
 Czar;

And here on the landward side, by a red rock, glimmers  
 the Hall ;  
 And up in the high Hall-garden I see her pass like a  
 light ;  
 But sorrow seize me if ever that light be my leading  
 star !

## 3.

When have I bow'd to her father, the wrinkled head of  
 the race ?  
 I met her to-day with her brother, but not to her  
 brother I bow'd ;  
 I bow'd to his lady-sister as she rode by on the  
 moor ;  
 But the fire of a foolish pride flash'd over her beautiful  
 face.  
 O child, you wrong your beauty, believe it, in being so  
 proud ;  
 Your father has wealth well-gotten, and I am nameless  
 and poor.

## 4.

I keep but a man and a maid, ever ready to slander  
 and steal ;  
 I know it, and smile a hard-set smile, like a stoic, or  
 like *dainty chooser* .  
 A wiser epicurean, and let the world have its way :  
 For nature is one with rapine, a harm no preacher can  
 heal ;  
 The Mayfly is torn by the swallow, the sparrow spear'd  
 by the shrike, *robbery* *butcher-bird* .  
 And the whole little wood where I sit is a world of  
 plunder and-prey.

## 5.

We are puppets, Man in his pride, and Beauty fair in  
 her flower ;  
 Do we move ourselves, or are moved by an unseen  
 hand at a game  
 That pushes us off from the board, and others ever  
 succeed ?  
 Ah yet, we cannot be kind to each other here for an  
 hour ;  
 We whisper, and hint, and chuckle, and grin at a  
 brother's shame ;  
 However we brave it out, we men are a little breed.

## 6.

*Salmon*  
 A monstrous eft was of old the Lord and Master of  
 Earth,  
 For him did his high sun flame, and his river billowing  
 ran,  
 And he felt himself in his force to be Nature's crowning  
 race.  
 As nine months go to the shaping an infant ripe for his  
 birth,  
 So many a million of ages have gone to the making of  
 man :  
 He now is first, but is he the last ? is he not too base ? *dependent*

## 7.

The man of science himself is fonder of glory, and vain,  
 An eye well-practised in nature, a spirit bounded and  
 poor ;  
 The passionate heart of the poet is whirl'd into folly  
 and vice.  
 I would not marvel at either, but keep a temperate  
 brain ;

*to become great  
man.*

For not to desire or admire, if a man could learn it,  
     were more  
 Than to walk all day like the sultan of old in a garden  
     of spice.

*Colanthe bird.*

## 8.

*Great goddess of the  
Egyptians.*

For the drift of the Maker is dark, an Isis hid by the  
     veil.  
 Who knows the ways of the world, how God will bring  
     them about?  
 Our planet is one, the suns are many, the world is  
     wide.  
 Shall I weep if a Poland fall? shall I shriek if a Hun-  
     gary fail?  
 Or an infant civilization be ruled with rod or with  
     knout?  
 I have not made the world, and He that made it will  
     guide.

## 9.

Be mine a philosopher's life in the quiet woodland  
     ways,  
 Where if I cannot be gay let a passionless peace be my  
     lot,  
 Far-off from the clamor of liars belied in the hubbub  
     of lies;  
 From the long-neck'd geese of the world that are ever  
     hissing dispraise,  
 Because their natures are little, and, whether he heed  
     it or not,  
 Where each man walks with his head in a cloud of  
     poisonous flies.

## 10.

And most of all would I flee from the cruel madness of  
love,

The honey of poison-flowers and all the measureless ill.

*Love/bauty*

Ah Maud, you milkwhite fawn, you are all unmeet for  
 a wife.

Your mother is mute in her grave as her image in  
 marble above;

Your father is ever in London, you wander about at  
 your will;

You have but fed on the roses, and lain in the lilies of  
life.

## V.

## 1.

*fight against  
growing passions.*

A VOICE by the cedar tree,

In the meadow under the Hall!

She is singing an air that is known to me,

A passionate ballad gallant and gay,

*warfare*

A martial song like a trumpet's call!

Singing alone in the morning of life,

In the happy morning of life and of May,

Singing of men that in battle array,

Ready in heart and ready in hand,

March with banner and bugle and fife

To the death, for their native land.

## 2.

Maud with her exquisite face,

And wild voice pealing up to the sunny sky,

And feet like sunny gems on an English green,

Maud in the light of her youth and her grace,



Singing of Death, and of Honor that cannot die,  
Till I well could weep for a time so sordid and mean,  
And myself so languid and base.

## 3.

Silence, beautiful voice !  
Be still, for you only trouble the mind  
With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,  
A glory I shall not find.  
Still ! I will hear you no more, *love, beauty.*  
For your sweetness hardly leaves me a choice  
But to move to the meadow and fall before  
Her feet on the meadow grass, and adore,  
Not her, who is neither courtly nor kind,  
Not her, not her, but a voice.

## VI.

*first interview with  
maud.*

## I.

MORNING arises stormy and pale,  
No sun, but a wannish glare  
In fold upon fold of hueless cloud,  
And the budded peaks of the wood are bow'd  
Caught and cuff'd by the gale :  
I had fancied it would be fair.

## 2.

Whom but Maud should I meet  
Last night, when the sunset burn'd  
On the blossom'd gable-ends  
At the head of the village street,  
Whom but Maud should I meet ?

And she touch'd my hand with a smile so sweet  
She made me divine amends  
For a courtesy not return'd.

## 3.

And thus a delicate spark  
Of glowing and growing light  
Thro' the livelong hours of the dark  
Kept itself warm in the heart of my dreams,  
Ready to burst in a color'd flame ;  
Till at last, when the morning came  
In a cloud, it faded, and seems  
But an ashen-gray delight.

## 4.

What if with her sunny hair,  
And smile as sunny as cold,  
She meant to weave me a snare  
Of some coquettish deceit,  
Cleopatra-like as of old  
To entangle me when we met,  
To have her lion roll in a silken net  
And fawn at a victor's feet.

## 5.

Ah, what shall I be at fifty  
Should Nature keep me alive,  
If I find the world so bitter  
When I am but twenty-five ?  
Yet, if she were not a cheat,  
If Maud were all that she seem'd,  
And her smile were all that I dream'd,  
Then the world were not so bitter  
But a smile could make it sweet.

## 6.

What if tho' her eye seem'd full  
 Of a kind intent to me, *absoluteruler*  
 What if that dandy-despot, he,  
 That jewell'd mass of millinery,  
 That oil'd and curl'd Assyrian Bull  
 Smelling of musk and of insolence,  
 Her brother, from whom I keep aloof, *away*  
 Who wants the finer politic sense *advantage*  
 To mask, tho' but in his own behoof,  
 With a glassy smile his brutal scorn, —  
 What if he had told her yestermorn  
 How prettily for his own sweet sake *invent*  
 A face of tenderness might be feign'd,  
 And a moist mirage in desert eyes, *candidate platform*  
 That so, when the rotten hustings shake  
 In another month to his brazen lies, *shameless*  
 A wretched vote may be gain'd.

## 7.

For a raven ever croaks, at my side,  
 Keep watch and ward, keep watch and ward, *protot*  
 Or thou wilt prove their tool.  
 Yea too, myself from myself I guard,  
 For often a man's own angry pride  
 Is cap and bells for a fool.

## 8.

Perhaps the smile and tender tone  
 Came out of her pitying womanhood,  
 For am I not, am I not, here alone  
 So many a summer since she died,  
 My mother, who was so gentle and good?  
 Living alone in an empty house,

Here half-hid in the gleaming wood,  
Where I hear the dead at midday moan,  
And the shrieking rush of the wainscot mouse,  
And my own sad name in corners cried,  
When the shiver of dancing leaves is thrown  
About its echoing chambers wide,  
Till a morbid hate and horror have grown  
Of a world in which I have hardly mixt,  
And a morbid eating lichen fixt  
On a heart half-turn'd to stone.

## 9.

O heart of stone, are you flesh, and caught  
By that you swore to withstand?  
For what was it else within me wrought  
But, I fear, the new strong wine of love,  
That made my tongue so stammer and trip  
When I saw the treasured splendor, her hand,  
Come sliding out of her sacred glove,  
And the sunlight broke from her lip?

## 10.

I have play'd with her when a child;  
She remembers it now we meet. *cheated*  
Ah well, well, well, I may be beguiled  
By some coquettish deceit.  
Yet, if she were not a cheat,  
If Maud were all that she seem'd,  
And her smile had all that I dream'd,  
Then the world were not so bitter  
But a smile could make it sweet.

*Recall  
his mother and  
father talking just before  
the birth of Maud!*

VII.

I.

DID I hear it half in a doze  
Long since, I know not where?  
Did I dream it an hour ago,  
When asleep in this arm-chair?

2.

Men were drinking together,  
Drinking and talking of me;  
'Well, if it prove a girl, the boy  
Will have plenty: so let it be.'

3.

Is it an echo of something  
Read with a boy's delight,  
Viziers nodding together  
In some Arabian night?

4.

Strange, that I hear two men,  
Somewhere, talking of me;  
'Well, if it prove a girl, my boy  
Will have plenty: so let it be.'

MAUD.

*It cannot be pride  
that she did not return  
his love.  
(Sec IV verse 3).*

## VIII.

SHE came to the village church,  
And sat by a pillar alone ;  
An angel watching an urn  
Wept over her, carved in stone ;  
And once, but once, she lifted her eyes,  
And suddenly, sweetly, strangely blush'd  
To find they were met by my own ;  
And suddenly, sweetly, my heart beat stronger  
And thicker, until I heard no longer  
The snowy-banded, dilettante,  
Delicate-handed priest intone ;  
And thought, is it pride, and mused and sigh'd  
' No surely, now it cannot be pride.'

## IX.

*first sight of hand -  
the young of hand -*

I WAS walking a mile,  
More than a mile from the shore,  
The sun look'd out with a smile  
Betwixt the cloud and the moor,  
And riding at set of day  
Over the dark moor land,  
Rapidly riding far away,  
She waved to me with her hand.  
There were two at her side,  
Something flash'd in the sun,

Down by the hill I saw them ride,  
In a moment they were gone :  
Like a sudden spark  
Struck vainly in the night,  
And back returns the dark  
With no more hope of light.

## X.

## I.

SICK, am I sick of a jealous dread ?  
Was not one of the two at her side  
This new-made lord, whose splendor plucks  
The slavish hat from the villager's head ?  
Whose old grandfather has lately died,  
Gone to a blacker pit, for whom  
Grimy nakedness dragging his trucks  
And laying his trams in a poison'd gloom  
Wrought, till he crept from a gutted mine  
Master of half a servile shire,  
And left his coal all turn'd into gold  
To a grandson, first of his noble line,  
Rich in the grace all women desire,  
Strong in the power that all men adore,  
And simper and set their voices lower,  
And soften as if to a girl, and hold  
Awe-stricken breaths at a work divine,  
Seeing his gewgaw castle shine,  
New as his title, built last year,  
There amid perky larches and pine,  
And over the sullen-purple moor  
(Look at it) pricking a cockney ear.

## 2.

What, has he found my jewel out ?  
 For one of the two that rode at her side  
 Bound for the Hall, I am sure was he :  
 Bound for the Hall, and I think for a bride.  
 Gay Blithe would her brother's acceptance be.  
 Maud could be gracious too, no doubt,  
 To a lord, a captain, a padded shape,  
 A bought commission, a waxen face,  
 A rabbit mouth that is ever agape —  
 Bought ? what is it he cannot buy ?  
 And therefore splenetic, personal, base,  
 A wounded thing with a rancorous cry,  
 At war with myself and a wretched race,  
Sick, sick to the heart of life, am I.

## 3.

Last week came one to the county town,  
 To preach our poor little army down,  
 And play the game of the despot kings,  
 Tho' the state has done it and thrice as well :  
 This broad-brim'd hawkers of holy things,  
 Whose ear is stuff'd with his cotton, and rings  
 Even in dreams to the chink of his pence,  
 This huckster put down war ! can he tell  
 Whether war be a cause or a consequence ?  
 Put down the passions that make earth Hell !  
Down with ambition, avarice, pride,  
Jealousy, down ! cut off from the mind  
The bitter springs of anger and fear ;  
 Down too, down at your own fireside,  
 With the evil tongue and the evil ear,  
 For each is at war with mankind.

a Hack on  
 peace at all  
 price men  
 that the  
 here  
 censures  
 against



## 4

I wish I could hear again  
The chivalrous battle-song  
That she warbled alone in her joy !  
I might persuade myself then  
She would not do herself this great wrong  
To take a wanton, dissolute boy  
For a man and leader of men.

## 5.

Ah God, for a man with heart, head, hand,  
Like some of the simple great ones gone  
For ever and ever by,  
One still strong man in a blatant land,  
Whatever they call him, what care I,  
Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat, — one  
Who can rule and dare not lie.

## 6.

And ah for a man to arise in me,  
That the man I am may cease to be !

## XI.

## I.

O LET the solid ground  
Not fail beneath my feet  
Before my life has found  
What some have found so sweet ;  
Then let come what come may,  
What matter if I go mad,  
I shall have had my day.

## 2.

Let the sweet heavens endure,  
 Not close and darken above me  
 Before I am quite quite sure  
 That there is one to love me ;  
 Then let come what come may  
 To a life that has been so sad,  
 I shall have had my day.

*Interview with  
 Maud.*

## XII.

## 1.

BIRDS in the high Hall-garden  
 When twilight was falling,  
 Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,  
 They were crying and calling.

*Like the rook's call*

## 2.

Where was Maud ? in our wood ;  
 And I, who else, was with her,  
 Gathering woodland lilies,  
 Myriads blow together.

## 3.

Birds in our wood sang  
 Ringing thro' the valleys,  
 Maud is here, here, here  
 In among the lilies.

*like the call of the little  
 birds*

4.

I kiss'd her slender hand,  
 She took the kiss sedately ;  
 Maud is not seventeen,  
 But she is tall and stately.

5.

I to cry out on pride  
 Who have won her favor !  
 O Maud were sure of Heaven  
 If lowliness could save her.

6.

I know the way she went  
 Home with her maiden posy,  
 For her feet have touch'd the meadows  
 And left the daisies rosy.

*If you tread on a  
 daisy, if the  
 rosy  
 up a  
 underne*

7.

Birds in the high Hall-garden  
 Were crying and calling to her,  
 Where is Maud, Maud, Maud,  
 One is come to woo her.

8.

Look, a horse at the door,  
 And little King Charles is snarling,  
 Go back, my lord, across the moor,  
 You are not her darling.



## XIII.

## I.

SCORN'D, to be scorn'd by one that I scorn,  
 Is that a matter to make me fret ?  
 That a calamity hard to be borne ?  
 Well, he may live to hate me yet.  
 Fool that I am to be vext with his pride !  
 I past him, I was crossing his lands ;  
 He stood on the path a little aside ;  
 His face, as I grant, in spite of spite,  
 Has a broad-blown comeliness, red and white,  
 And six feet two, as I think, he stands ;  
 But his essences turn'd the live air sick,  
 And barbarous opulence jewel-thick  
 Sunn'd itself on his breast and his hands.

## 2.

Who shall call me ungentle, unfair,  
 I long'd so heartily then and there  
 To give him the grasp of fellowship ;  
 But while I past he was humming an air,  
 Stopt, and then with a riding whip  
 Leisurely tapping a glossy boot,  
 And curving a contumelious lip,  
 Gorgonized me from head to foot  
 With a stony British stare.

## 3.

Why sits he here in his father's chair ?  
 That old man never comes to his place :  
 Shall I believe him ashamed to be seen ?

*morbidly prophetic  
 He sees it and is  
 mother, who will  
 not recognize  
 him -*

*stoned*

*insolent*

For only once, in the village street,  
Last year, I caught a glimpse of his face,  
A gray old wolf and a lean.  
Scarcely, now, would I call him a cheat ;  
For then, perhaps, as a child of deceit,  
She might by a true descent be untrue ;  
And Maud is as true as Maud is sweet :  
Tho' I fancy her sweetness only due  
To the sweeter blood by the other side ;  
Her mother has been a thing complete,  
However she came to be so allied.  
And fair without, faithful within,  
Maud to him is nothing akin :  
Some peculiar mystic grace  
Made her only the child of her mother,  
And heap'd the whole inherited sin  
On that huge scapegoat of the race,  
All, all upon the brother.

## 4.

Peace, angry spirit, and let him be !  
Has not his sister smiled on me ?

## XIV.

## I.

MAUD has a garden of roses  
And lilies fair on a lawn ;  
There she walks in her state  
And tends upon bed and bower  
And thither I climb'd at dawn

- And stood by her garden gate ;  
A lion ramps at the top,  
He is claspt by a passion-flower.

## 2.

Maud's own little oak-room  
(Which Maud, like a precious stone  
Set in the heart of the carven gloom,  
Lights with herself, when alone  
She sits by her music and books,  
And her brother lingers late  
With a roystering company) looks  
Upon Maud's own garden gate :  
And I thought as I stood, if a hand, as white  
As ocean-foam in the moon, were laid  
On the hasp of the window, and my Delight  
Had a sudden desire, like a glorious ghost, to glide,  
Like a beam of the seventh Heaven, down to my side,  
There were but a step to be made.

## 3.

The fancy flatter'd my mind,  
And again seem'd overbold ;  
Now I thought that she cared for me,  
Now I thought she was kind  
Only because she was cold.

*stream*

## 4

I heard no sound where I stood  
But the rivulet on from the lawn  
Running down to my own dark wood ;  
Or the voice of the long sea-wave as it swell'd  
Now and then in the dim-gray dawn ;  
But I look'd, and round, all round the house I beheld

The death-white curtain drawn ;  
 Felt a horror over me creep,  
 Prickle my skin and catch my breath,  
Knew that the death-white curtain meant but sleep,  
Yet I shudder'd and thought like a fool of the sleep of  
 death.

## XV.

So dark a mind within me dwells,  
 And I make myself such evil cheer,  
 That if I be dear to some one else,  
     Then some one else may have much to fear ;  
 But if I be dear to some one else,  
     Then I should be to myself more dear.  
 Shall I not take care of all that I think,  
 Yea ev'n of wretched meat and drink,  
 If I be dear,  
 If I be dear to some one else ?

## XVI.

## I.

THIS lump of earth has left his estate  
 The lighter by the loss of his weight ;  
 And so that he find what he went to seek,  
 And fulsome Pleasure clog him, and drown  
 His heart in the gross mud-honey of town,  
 He may stay for a year who has gone for a week :

*He will declare his  
 Love*

But this is the day when I must speak,  
 And I see my Oread coming down,  
 O this is the day !  
 O beautiful creature, what am I  
 That I dare to look her way ;  
 Think I may hold dominion sweet,  
 Lord of the pulse that is lord of her breast,  
 And dream of her beauty with tender dread,  
 From the delicate Arab arch of her feet  
 To the grace that, bright and light as the crest  
 Of a peacock, sits on her shining head,  
 And she knows it not : O, if she knew it,  
 To know her beauty might half undo it.  
 I know it the one bright thing to save  
My yet young life in the wilds of Time,  
Perhaps from madness, perhaps from crime,  
Perhaps from a selfish grave.

## 2.

What, if she be fasten'd to this fool lord,  
 Dare I bid her abide by her word ?  
 Should I love her so well if she  
 Had given her word to a thing so low ?  
 Shall I love her as well if she  
 Can break her word were it even for me ?  
 I trust that it is not so.

## 3.

Catch not my breath, O clamorous heart,  
 Let not my tongue be a thrall to my eye,  
 For I must tell her before we part,  
I must tell her, or die.



## XVII.

Accepted

Go not, happy day,  
From the shining fields,  
Go not, happy day,  
Till the maiden yields.  
Rosy is the West,  
Rosy is the South,  
Roses are her cheeks,  
And a rose her mouth.  
When the happy Yes  
Falters from her lips,  
Pass and blush the news  
O'er the blowing ships.  
Over blowing seas,  
Over seas at rest,  
Pass the happy news,  
Blush it thro' the West ;  
Till the red man dance  
By his red cedar-tree,  
And the red man's babe  
Leap, beyond the sea.  
Blush from West to East,  
Blush from East to West,  
Till the West is East,  
Blush it thro' the West.  
Rosy is the West,  
Rosy is the South,  
Roses are her cheeks,  
And a rose her mouth.

## XVIII.

## 1.

I HAVE led her home, my love, my only friend.  
 There is none like her, none.  
 And never yet so warmly ran my blood  
 And sweetly, on and on  
 Calming itself to the long-wish'd-for end,  
 Full to the banks, close on the promised good.

## 2.

None like her, none.  
 Just now the dry-tongued laurels' pattering talk  
 Seem'd her light foot along the garden walk,  
 And shook my heart to think she comes once more;  
 But even then I heard her close the door,  
 The gates of Heaven are closed, and she is gone.

## 3.

There is none like her, none.  
 Nor will be when our summers have deceased.  
 O, art thou sighing for Lebanon  
 In the long breeze that streams to thy delicious East,  
 Sighing for Lebanon,  
 Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have here increased,  
 Upon a pastoral slope as fair,  
 And looking to the South, and fed  
 With honey'd rain and delicate air,  
 And haunted by the starry head  
 Of her whose gentle will has changed my fate,  
 And made my life a perfumed altar-flame;  
 And over whom thy darkness must have spread  
 With such delight as theirs of old, thy great

*Happy sigh for the cedar branches seems to chime in with his own yearning.*

*garden shrub*

Forefathers of the thornless garden, there  
Shadowing the snow-limb'd Eve from whom she came.

## 4.

Here will I lie, while these long branches sway,  
And you fair stars that crown a happy day  
Go in and out as if at merry play,  
Who am no more so all forlorn,  
As when it seem'd far better to be born  
To labor and the mattock-harden'd hand,  
Than nursed at ease and brought to understand  
A sad astrology, the boundless plan  
That makes you tyrants in your iron skies,  
Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,  
Cold fires, yet with power to burn and brand  
His nothingness into man.

Old was there  
to sympathy  
and would no  
fate

## 5.

But now shine on, and what care I,  
Who in this stormy gulf have found a pearl  
The countercharm of space and hollow sky,  
And do accept my madness, and would die  
To save from some slight shame one simple girl.

## 6.

Would die ; for sullen-seeming Death may give  
More life to Love than is or ever was  
In our low world, where yet 't is sweet to live.  
Let no one ask me how it came to pass ;  
It seems that I am happy, that to me  
A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,  
A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

## 7.

Not die ; but live a life of truest breath,  
And teach true life to fight with mortal wrongs.

the holy power of love

O, why should Love, like men in drinking-songs,  
 Spice his fair banquet with the dust of death?  
 Make answer, Maud my bliss,  
 Maud made my Maud by that long lover's kiss,  
 Life of my life, wilt thou not answer this?  
 'The dusky strand of Death inwoven here—  
 With dear Love's tie, makes Love himself more dear.'

*Image taken from  
 colour shaded  
 rope*

## 8.

Is that enchanted moan only the swell  
 Of the long waves that roll in yonder bay?  
 And hark the clock within, the silver knell  
 Of twelve sweet hours that past in bridal white,  
 And died to live, long as my pulses play;  
 But now by this my love has closed her sight  
 And given false death her hand, and stol'n away  
 To dreamful wastes where footless fancies dwell  
 Among the fragments of the golden day.  
 May nothing there her maiden grace affright!  
 Dear heart, I feel with thee the drowsy spell.  
 My bride to be, my evermore delight,  
 My own heart's heart and ownest own farewell;  
 It is but for a little space I go  
 And ye meanwhile far over moor and fell  
 Beat to the noiseless music of the night!  
 Has our whole earth gone nearer to the glow  
 Of your soft splendors that you look so bright?  
 I have climb'd nearer out of lonely Hell.  
 Beat, happy stars, timing with things below,  
 Beat with my heart more blest than heart can tell,  
 Blest, but for some dark undercurrent woe  
 That seems to draw — but it shall not be so:  
 Let all be well, be well.

## XIX.

## 1.

HER brother is coming back to-night,  
Breaking up my dream of delight.

## 2.

My dream ? do I dream of bliss ?  
I have walk'd awake with Truth.  
O when did a morning shine  
So rich in atonement as this  
For my dark-dawning youth,  
Darken'd watching a mother decline  
And that dead man at her heart and mine :  
For who was left to watch her but I ?  
Yet so did I let my freshness die.

## 3.

I trust that I did not talk  
To gentle Maud in our walk  
(For often in lonely wanderings  
I have cursed him even to lifeless things)  
But I trust that I did not talk,  
Not touch on her father's sin :  
I am sure I did but speak  
Of my mother's faded cheek  
When it slowly grew so thin,  
That I felt she was slowly dying  
Vext with lawyers and harass'd with debt :  
For how often I caught her with eyes all wet,  
Shaking her head at her son and sighing  
A world of trouble within !

## 4

And Maud too, Maud was moved  
To speak of the mother she loved  
As one scarce less forlorn,  
Dying abroad and it seems apart  
From him who had ceased to share her heart,  
And ever mourning over the feud,  
The household Fury sprinkled with blood  
By which our houses are torn :  
How strange was what she said,  
When only Maud and the brother  
Hung over her dying bed, —  
That Maud's dark father and mine  
Had bound us one to the other,  
Betrothed us over their wine,  
On the day when Maud was born ;  
Seal'd her mine from her first sweet breath.  
Mine, mine by a right, from birth till death,  
Mine, mine — our fathers have sworn.

## 5.

But the true blood spilt had in it a heat  
To dissolve the precious seal on a bond,  
That, if left uncancell'd, had been so sweet :  
And none of us thought of a something beyond,  
A desire that awoke in the heart of the child,  
As it were a duty done to the tomb,  
To be friends for her sake, to be reconciled ;  
And I was cursing them and my doom,  
And letting a dangerous thought run wild  
While often abroad in the fragrant gloom  
Of foreign churches, — I see her there,  
Bright English lily, breathing a prayer  
To be friends, to be reconciled !

## 6.

But then what a flint is he !  
Abroad, at Florence, at Rome,  
I find whenever she touch'd on me  
This brother had laugh'd her down,  
And at last, when each came home,  
He had darken'd into a frown,  
Chid her, and forbid her to speak  
To me, her friend of the years before ;  
And this was what had redden'd her cheek,  
When I bow'd to her on the moor.

## 7.

Yet Maud, altho' not blind  
To the faults of his heart and mind,  
I see she cannot but love him,  
And says he is rough but kind,  
And wishes me to approve him,  
And tells me, when she lay  
Sick once, with a fear of worse,  
That he left his wine and horses and play,  
Sat with her, read to her, night and day,  
And tended her like a nurse.

## 8.

Kind ? but the death-bed desire  
Spurn'd by this heir of the liar —  
Rough but kind ? yet I know  
He has plotted against me in this,  
That he plots against me still.  
Kind to Maud ? that were not amiss.  
Well, rough but kind ; why, let it be so :  
For shall not Maud have her will ?

## 9.

For, Maud, so tender and true,  
As long as my life endures  
I feel I shall owe you a debt,  
That I never can hope to pay ;  
And if ever I should forget  
That I owe this debt to you  
And for your sweet sake to yours ;  
O then, what then shall I say ? —  
If ever I *should* forget,  
~~May God make me more wretched~~  
Than ever I have been yet !

## 10.

So now I have sworn to bury  
All this dead body of hate,  
I feel so free and so clear  
By the loss of that dead weight,  
That I should grow light-headed, I fear,  
Fantastically merry ;  
But that her brother comes, like a blight  
On my fresh hope, to the Hall to-night.

## XX.

## I.

STRANGE, that I felt so gay,  
Strange, that I tried to-day  
To beguile her melancholy ;  
The Sultan, as we name him, —  
She did not wish to blame him —



But he vext her and perplext her  
With his worldly talk and folly :  
Was it gentle to reprove her *rebu ke*  
For stealing out of view  
From a little lazy lover  
Who but claims her as his due ?  
Or for chilling his caresses  
By the coldness of her manners,  
Nay, the plainness of her dresses ?  
Now I know her but in two,  
Nor can pronounce upon it  
If one should ask me whether  
The habit, hat, and feather,  
Or the frock and gipsy bonnet  
Be the neater and completer ;  
For nothing can be sweeter  
Than maiden Maud in either.

## 2.

But to-morrow, if we live,  
Our ponderous squire will give  
A grand political dinner  
To half the squirelings near ;  
And Maud will wear her jewels,  
And the bird of prey will hover,  
And the titmouse hope to win her  
With his chirrup at her ear.

## 3.

A grand political dinner  
To the men of many acres,  
A gathering of the Tory,  
A dinner and then a dance  
For the maids and marriage-makers,

And every eye but mine will glance  
At Maud in all her glory.

## 4.

For I am not invited,  
But, with the Sultan's pardon,  
I am all as well delighted,  
For I know her own rose-garden,  
And mean to linger in it  
Till the dancing will be over ;  
And then, oh then, come out to me  
For a minute, but for a minute,  
Come out to your own true lover,  
That your true lover may see  
Your glory also, and render  
All homage to his own darling,  
Queen Maud in all her splendor.

## XXI.

RIVULET crossing my ground,  
And bringing me down from the Hall  
This garden-rose that I found,  
Forgetful of Maud and me,  
And lost in trouble and moving round  
Here at the head of a tinkling fall,  
And trying to pass to the sea ;  
O Rivulet, born at the Hall,  
My Maud has sent it by thee  
(If I read her sweet will right)  
On a blushing mission to me,  
Saying in odor and color, "Ah, be  
Among the roses to-night."

*In the  
Hall Garden*

XXII.

I.

COME into the garden, Maud,  
For the black bat, night, has flown,  
Come into the garden, Maud,  
I am here at the gate alone ;  
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,  
And the musk of the roses blown.

2.

For a breeze of morning moves,  
And the planet of Love is on high,  
Beginning to faint in the light that she loves  
On a bed of daffodil sky,  
To faint in the light of the sun she loves,  
To faint in his light, and to die.

3.

All night have the roses heard  
The flute, violin, bassoon ;  
All night has the casement jessamine stirr'd  
To the dancers dancing in tune ;  
Till a silence fell with the waking bird,  
And a hush with the setting moon.

4.

I said to the lily, ' There is but one  
With whom she has heart to be gay.  
When will the dancers leave her alone ?  
She is weary of dance and play.'

Now half to the setting moon are gone,  
And half to the rising day ;  
Low on the sand and loud on the stone  
The last wheel echoes away.

## 5.

I said to the rose, ' The brief night goes  
In babble and revel and wine.  
O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,  
For one that will never be thine ?  
But mine, but mine,' so I sware to the rose,  
' For ever and ever, mine.'

## 6.

And the soul of the rose went into my blood,  
As the music clash'd in the hall ;  
And long by the garden lake I stood,  
For I heard your rivulet fall  
From the lake to the meadow and on to the wood,  
Our wood, that is dearer than all ;

## 7.

From the meadow your walks have left so sweet  
That whenever a March-wind sighs  
He sets the jewel-print of your feet  
In violets blue as your eyes,  
To the woody hollows in which we meet  
And the valleys of Paradise.

## 8.

The slender acacia would not shake  
One long milk-bloom on the tree ;  
The white lake-blossom fell into the lake,  
As the pimpernel dozed on the lea ;

But the rose was awake all night for your sake,  
 Knowing your promise to me ;  
 The lilies and roses were all awake,  
 They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

## 9.

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,  
 Come hither, the dances are done,  
 In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,  
Queen lily and rose in one ;  
 Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls,  
 To the flowers, and be their sun.

## 10.

There has fallen a splendid tear  
 From the passion-flower at the gate.  
 She is coming, my dove, my dear ;  
 She is coming, my life, my fate ;  
 The red rose cries, ' She is near, she is near ;'  
 And the white rose weeps, ' She is late ;'  
 The larkspur listens, ' I hear, I hear ;'  
 And the lily whispers, ' I wait.'

## 11.

She is coming, my own, my sweet ;  
 Were it ever so airy a tread,  
My heart would hear her and beat,  
Were it earth in an earthy bed ;  
My dust would hear her and beat,  
Had I lain for a century dead ;  
 Would start and tremble under her feet,  
 And blossom in purple and red.

PART II

## XXIII.

## I.

'THE fault was mine, the fault was mine' —  
 Why am I sitting here so stunn'd and still,  
 Plucking the harmless wild-flower on the hill ? —  
 It is this guilty hand ! —  
 And there rises ever a passionate cry  
 From underneath in the darkening land —  
 What is it, that has been done ?  
 O dawn of Eden bright over earth and sky,  
 The fires of Hell brake out of thy rising sun,  
 The fires of Hell and of Hate ;  
 For she, sweet soul, had hardly spoken a word,  
 When her brother ran in his rage to the gate,  
 He came with the babe-faced lord ;  
 Heap'd on her terms of disgrace,  
 And while she wept, and I strove to be cool,  
 He fiercely gave me the lie,  
 Till I with as fierce an anger spoke,  
 And he struck me, madman, over the face,  
 Struck me before the languid fool,  
 Who was gaping and grinning by :  
 Struck for himself an evil stroke ;  
 Wrought for his house an irredeemable woe ;  
 For front to front in an hour we stood,  
 And a million horrible bellowing echoes broke  
 From the red-ribb'd hollow behind the wood,  
 And thunder'd up into Heaven the Christless code,  
 That must have life for a blow.  
 Ever and ever afresh they seem'd to grow.

 form without  
 substance

 The Phantom  
 (after the duel  
 with Maud's  
 brother)

Was it he lay there with a fading eye ?  
 'The fault was mine,' he whisper'd, 'fly !'  
 Then glided out of the joyous wood  
 The ghastly Wraith of one that I know ;  
 And there rang on a sudden a passionate cry,  
 A cry for a brother's blood :  
 It will ring in my heart and my ears, till I die, till I die.

## 2.

Is it gone ? my pulses beat —  
 What was it ? a lying trick of the brain ?  
 Yet I thought I saw her stand,  
 A shadow there at my feet,  
 High over the shadowy land.  
 It is gone ; and the heavens fall in a gentle rain,  
 When they should burst and drown with deluging storms  
 The feeble vassals of wine and anger and lust,  
 The little hearts that know not how to forgive :  
 Arise, my God, and strike, for we hold Thee just,  
 Strike dead the whole weak race of venomous worms,  
 That sting each other here in the dust ;  
 We are not worthy to live.

In Brittany  
 The shell under a tree  
 amid the stones  
 perhaps symbolize  
 to her his own  
 and highest  
 nature  
 preserved and  
 the storm  
 of passion

## XXIV.

## I.

SEE what a lovely shell,  
 Small and pure as a pearl,  
 Lying close to my foot,  
 Frail, but a work divine,  
 Made so fairly well  
 With delicate spire and whorl,

How exquisitely minute,  
A miracle of design !

## 2.

What is it ? a learned man  
Could give it a clumsy name.  
Let him name it who can,  
The beauty would be the same.

## 3.

The tiny cell is forlorn,  
Void of the little living will  
That made it stir on the shore.  
Did he stand at the diamond door  
Of his house in a rainbow frill ?  
Did he push, when he was uncurl'd,  
A golden foot or a fairy horn  
Thro' his dim water-world ?

## 4.

Slight, to be crush'd with a tap  
Of my finger-nail on the sand,  
Small, but a work divine,  
Frail, but of force to withstand,  
Year upon year, the shock  
Of cataract seas that snap  
The three-decker's oaken spine  
Athwart the ledges of rock,  
Here on the Breton strand !

## 5.

Breton, not Briton ; here  
Like a shipwreck'd man on a coast  
Of ancient fable and fear, —



Plagued with a flitting to and fro,  
 A disease, a hard mechanic ghost  
 That never came from on high  
 Nor ever arose from below,  
 But only moves with the moving eye,  
 Flying along the land and the main, —  
 Why should it look like Maud ?  
 Am I to be overawed  
 By what I cannot but know  
 Is a juggle born of the brain ?

## 6.

Back from the Breton coast,  
 Sick of a nameless fear,  
 Back to the dark sea-line  
 Looking, thinking of all I have lost ;  
 An old song vexes my ear ;  
 But that of Lamech is mine.

*"I have slain a man to my  
 weeping, and a young man to my  
 heart."*  
*Gen.*

## 7.

For years, a measureless ill,  
 For years, forever, to part, —  
 But she, she would love me still ;  
 And as long, O God, as she  
 Have a grain of love for me,  
 So long, no doubt, no doubt,  
 Shall I nurse in my dark heart,  
 However weary, a spark of will  
 Not to be trampled out.

## 8.

Strange, that the mind, when fraught  
 With a passion so intense  
 One would think that it well

*equipped*

Might drown all life in the eye, —  
 That it should, by being so overwrought,  
 Suddenly strike on a sharper sense  
 For a shell, or a flower, little things  
 Which else would have been past by !  
 And now I remember, I,  
 When he lay dying there,  
 I noticed one of his many rings  
 (For he had many, poor worm) and thought  
 It is his mother's hair.

## 9.

Who knows if he be dead ?  
 Whether I need have fled ?  
 Am I guilty of blood ?  
 However this may be,  
 Comfort her, comfort her, all things good,  
 While I am over the sea !  
 Let me and my passionate love go by,  
 But speak to her all things holy and high,  
 Whatever happen to me !  
 Me and my harmful love go by ;  
 But come to her waking, find her asleep,  
 Powers of the height, Powers of the deep,  
 And comfort her tho' I die.

## XXV.

COURAGE, poor heart of stone !  
 I will not ask thee why  
 Thou canst not understand  
 That thou art left forever alone :

He felt himself  
 going mad.

Courage, poor stupid heart of stone. —  
Or if I ask thee why,  
Care not thou to reply :  
She is but dead, and the time is at hand  
When thou shalt more than die.

XXVI.

1.

O THAT 't were possible  
After long grief and pain  
To find the arms of my true love  
Round me once again !

2.

When I was wont to meet her  
In the silent woody places  
By the home that gave me birth,  
We stood tranced in long embraces  
Mixt with kisses sweeter sweeter  
Than anything on earth.

3.

A shadow flits before me,  
Not thou, but like to thee ;  
Ah Christ, that it were possible  
For one short hour to see  
The souls we loved, that they might tell us  
What and where they be.

*Haunted (after Maud)*

## 4.

It leads me forth at evening,  
It lightly winds and steals  
In a cold white robe before me,  
When all my spirit reels  
At the shouts, the leagues of lights,  
And the roaring of the wheels.

## 5.

Half the night I waste in sighs,  
Half in dreams I sorrow after  
The delight of early skies ;  
In a wakeful doze I sorrow  
For the hand, the lips, the eyes,  
For the meeting of the morrow,  
The delight of happy laughter,  
The delight of low replies.

## 6.

'T is a morning pure and sweet,  
And a dewy splendor falls  
On the little flower that clings  
To the turrets and the walls ;  
'T is a morning pure and sweet,  
And the light and shadow fleet ;  
She is walking in the meadow,  
And the woodland echo rings ;  
In a moment we shall meet ;  
She is singing in the meadow,  
And the rivulet at her feet  
Ripples on in light and shadow  
To the ballad that she sings.

## 7.

Do I hear her sing as of old,  
My bird with the shining head,  
My own dove with the tender eye ?  
But there rings on a sudden a passionate cry,  
There is some one dying or dead,  
And a sullen thunder is roll'd ;  
For a tumult shakes the city,  
And I wake, my dream is fled ;  
In the shuddering dawn, behold,  
Without knowledge, without pity,  
By the curtains of my bed  
That abiding phantom cold.

## 8.

Get thee hence, nor come again,  
Mix not memory with doubt,  
Pass, thou deathlike type of pain,  
Pass and cease to move about,  
'T is the blot upon the brain  
That *will* show itself without.

## 9.

Then I rise, the eavedrops fall,  
And the yellow vapors choke  
The great city sounding wide ;  
The day comes, a dull red ball  
Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke  
On the misty river-tide.

## 10.

Thro' the hubbub of the market  
I steal, a wasted frame,  
It crosses here, it crosses there,

Thro' all that crowd confused and loud,  
The shadow still the same ;  
And on my heavy eyelids  
My anguish hangs like shame.

## 11.

Alas for her that met me,  
That heard me softly call,  
Came glimmering thro' the laurels  
At the quiet evenfall,  
In the garden by the turrets  
Of the old manorial hall.

## 12.

Would the happy spirit descend,  
From the realms of light and song,  
In the chamber or the street,  
As she looks among the blest,  
Should I fear to greet my friend  
Or to say 'forgive the wrong,'  
Or to ask her, 'take me, sweet,  
To the regions of thy rest ?'

## 13.

But the broad light glares and beats,  
And the shadow flits and fleets  
And will not let me be ;  
And I loathe the squares and streets,  
And the faces that one meets,  
Hearts with no love for me :  
Always I long to creep  
Into some still cavern deep,  
There to weep, and weep, and weep  
My whole soul out to thee. }

XXVII.

I.

DEAD, long dead,  
 Long dead !  
 And my heart is a handful of dust,  
 And the wheels go over my head,  
 And my bones are shaken with pain,  
 For into a shallow grave they are thrust,  
 Only a yard beneath the street,  
 And the hoofs of the horses beat, beat,  
 The hoofs of the horses beat,  
 Beat into my scalp and my brain,  
 With never an end to the stream of passing feet,  
 Driving, hurrying, marrying, burying,  
 Clamor and rumble, and ringing and clatter,  
 And here beneath it is all as bad,  
 For I thought the dead had peace, but it is not so ;  
 To have no peace in the grave, is that not sad ?  
 But up and down and to and fro,  
 Ever about me the dead men go ;  
 And then to hear a dead man chatter  
 Is enough to drive one mad.

2.

Wretchedest age, since Time began,  
 They cannot even bury a man ;  
 And tho' we paid our tithes in the days that are gone,  
 Not a bell was rung, not a prayer was read ;  
 It is that which makes us loud in the world of the dead ;  
 There is none that does his work, not one ;  
 A touch of their office might have sufficed,

But the churchmen fain would kill their church,  
As the churches have kill'd their Christ.

## 3.

See, there is one of us sobbing,  
No limit to his distress ;  
And another, a lord of all things, praying  
To his own great self, as I guess ;  
And another, a statesman there, betraying  
His party-secret, fool, to the press ;  
And yonder a vile physician, blabbing  
The case of his patient, — all for what ?  
To tickle the maggot born in an empty head,  
And wheedle a world that loves him not,  
For it is but a world of the dead.

## 4.

Nothing but idiot gabble !  
For the prophecy given of old  
And then not understood,  
Has come to pass as foretold ;  
Not let any man think for the public good,  
But babble, merely for babble.  
For I never whisper'd a private affair  
Within the hearing of cat or mouse,  
No, not to myself in the closet alone,  
But I heard it shouted at once from the top of the house ;  
Everything came to be known :  
Who told *him* we were there ? (*the house*)

## 5.

Not that gray old wolf, for he came not back  
From the wilderness, full of wolves, where he used to lie ;  
He has gather'd the bones for his o'ergrown whelp to  
crack ;  
Crack them now for yourself, and howl, and die.



## 6.

Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,  
 And curse me the British vermin, the rat;  
 I know not whether he came in the Hanover ship,  
 But I know that he lies and listens mute  
 In an ancient mansion's crannies and holes :  
 Arsenic, 'arsenic, sure, would do it,  
 Except that now we poison our babes, poor souls !  
 It is all used up for that.

## 7.

Tell him now : she is standing here at my head ;  
 Not beautiful now, not even kind ;  
 He may take her now ; for she never speaks her mind,  
 But is ever the one thing silent here.  
 She is not of us, as I divine ;  
 She comes from another stiller world of the dead,  
 Stiller, not fairer than mine.

## 8.

But I know where a garden grows,  
 Fairer than aught in the world beside,  
 All made up of the lily and rose  
 That blow by night, when the season is good,  
 To the sound of dancing music and flutes :  
 It is only flowers, they had no fruits,  
 And I almost fear they are not roses, but blood ;  
 For the keeper was one, so full of pride,  
 He linkt a dead man there to a spectral bride ;  
 For he, if he had not been a Sultan of brutes,  
 Would he have that hole in his side ?

## 9.

But what will the old man say ?  
 He laid a cruel snare in a pit

To catch a friend of mine one stormy day ;  
 Yet now I could even weep to think of it ;  
 For what will the old man say  
 When he comes to the second corpse in the pit ?

*Maud's brother  
 being 1st.*

## 10.

Friend, to be struck by the public foe,  
 Then to strike him and lay him low,  
 That were a public merit, far,  
 Whatever the Quaker holds, from sin ;  
 But the red life spilt for a private blow —  
 I swear to you, lawful and lawless war  
 Are scarcely even akin.

## 11.

O me, why have they not buried me deep enough ?  
 Is it kind to have made me a grave so rough,  
 Me, that was never a quiet sleeper ?  
 Maybe still I am but half-dead ;  
 Then I cannot be wholly dumb ;  
 I will cry to the steps above my head,  
 And somebody, surely, some kind heart will come  
 To bury me, bury me  
 Deeper, ever so little deeper.

*PART III.*  
*same, but  
 shattered.*

## XXVIII.

## I.

My life has crept so long on a broken wing  
 Thro' cells of madness, haunts of horror and fear,  
 That I come to be grateful at last for a little thing :  
 My mood is changed, for it fell at a time of year

When the face of night is fair on the dewy downs,  
 And the shining daffodil dies, and the Charioteer  
 And starry Gemini hang like glorious crowns  
 Over Orion's grave low down in the west,  
 That like a silent lightning under the stars  
 She seem'd to divide in a dream from a band of the blest,  
 And spoke of a hope for the world in the coming wars —  
 'And in that hope, dear soul, let trouble have rest,  
 Knowing I tarry for thee,' and pointed to Mars  
 As he glow'd like a ruddy shield on the Lion's breast.

## 2.

And it was but a dream, yet it yielded a dear delight  
 To have look'd, tho' but in a dream, upon eyes so fair,  
 That had been in a weary world my one thing bright;  
 And it was but a dream, yet it lighten'd my despair  
 When I thought that a war would arise in defence of  
 the right,

That an iron tyranny now should bend or cease,  
 The glory of manhood stand on his ancient height,  
 Nor Britain's one sole God be the millionaire:  
 No more shall commerce be all in all, and Peace  
 Pipe on her pastoral hillock a languid note,  
 And watch her harvest ripen, her herd increase,  
 Nor the cannon-bullet rust on a slothful shore,  
 And the cobweb woven across the cannon's throat  
 Shall shake its threaded tears in the wind no more.

## 3.

And as months ran on and rumor of battle grew,  
 'It is time, it is time, O passionate heart,' said I  
 (For I cleaved to a cause that I felt to be pure and true),  
 'It is time, O passionate heart and morbid eye,  
 That old hysterical mock-disease should die.'  
 And I stood on a giant deck and mix'd my breath

Civil  
 war  
 is dead  
 in its  
 effect  
 minimum  
 with  
 which  
 have  
 be subdued  
 the war between  
 nations, be  
 this war is  
 not easily  
 recognized

With a loyal people shouting a battle cry,  
Till I saw the dreary phantom arise and fly  
Far into the North, and battle, and seas of death.

## 4.

Let it go or stay, so I wake to the higher aims  
Of a land that has lost for a little her lust of gold,  
And love of a peace that was full of wrongs and shames,  
Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to be told ;  
And hail once more to the banner of battle unroll'd !  
Tho' many a light shall darken, and many shall weep  
For those that are crush'd in the clash of jarring claims,  
Yet God's just wrath shall be wreak'd on a giant liar ;  
And many a darkness into the light shall leap,  
And shine in the sudden making of splendid names,  
And noble thought be freer under the sun,  
And the heart of a people beat with one desire ;  
For the peace, that I deem'd no peace, is over and done,  
And now by the side of the Black and the Baltic deep,  
And deathful-grinning mouths of the fortress, flames  
The blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire.

## 5.

Let it flame or fade, and the war roll down like a wind,  
We have proved we have hearts in a cause, we are noble  
still,

And myself have awaked, as it seems, to the better mind ;  
It is better to fight for the good, than to rail at the ill ;  
I have felt with my native land, I am one with my kind,  
I embrace the purpose of God, and the doom assign'd.





## THE BROOK;

AN IDYL.

‘ **H**ERE, by this brook, we parted ; I to the East  
And he for Italy — too late — too late :  
One whom the strong sons of the world despise ;  
For lucky rhymes to him were scrip and share,  
And mellow metres more than cent for cent ;  
Nor could he understand how money breeds,  
Thought it a dead thing ; yet himself could make  
The thing that is not as the thing that is.  
O had he lived ! In our school-books we say,  
Of those that held their heads above the crowd,  
They flourish’d then or then ; but life in him  
Could scarce be said to flourish, only touch’d  
On such a time as goes before the leaf,  
When all the wood stands in a mist of green,  
And nothing perfect : yet the brook he loved,  
For which, in branding summers of Bengal,  
Or ev’n the sweet half-English Neilgherry air,  
I panted, seems, as I re-listen to it,  
Prattling the primrose fancies of the boy,  
To me that loved him ; for “ O brook,” he says,

"O babbling brook," says Edmund in his rhyme,  
"Whence come you?" and the brook, why not? replies.

I come from haunts of coot and hern,  
I make a sudden sally  
And sparkle out among the fern,  
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,  
Or slip between the ridges,  
By twenty thorps, a little town,  
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on forever.

'Poor lad, he died at Florence, quite worn out,  
Travelling to Naples. There is Darnley bridge,  
It has more ivy; there the river; and there  
Stands Philip's farm where brook and river meet.

I chatter over stony ways,  
In little sharps and trebles,  
I bubble into eddying bays,  
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret  
By many a field and fallow,  
And many a fairy foreland set  
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on forever.

‘ But Philip chatter’d more than brook or bird ;  
Old Philip ; all about the fields you caught  
His weary daylong chirping, like the dry  
High-elbow’d grigs that leap in summer grass.

I wind about, and in and out,  
With here a blossom sailing,  
And here and there a lusty trout,  
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake  
Upon me, as I travel  
With many a silvery waterbreak  
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on forever.

‘ O darling Katie Willows, his one child !  
A maiden of our century, yet most meek ;  
A daughter of our meadows, yet not coarse ;  
Straight, but as lissome as a hazel wand ;  
Her eyes a bashful azure, and her hair  
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell  
Divides threefold to show the fruit within.

‘ Sweet Katie, once I did her a good turn,  
Her and her far-off cousin and betrothed,  
James Willows, of one name and heart with her.  
For here I came, twenty years back, — the week  
Before I parted with poor Edmund ; crost  
By that old bridge which, half in ruins then,  
Still makes a hoary eyebrow for the gleam  
Beyond it, where the waters marry — crost,

Whistling a random bar of Bonny Doon,  
And push'd at Philip's garden-gate. The gate,  
Half-parted from a weak and scolding hinge,  
Stuck ; and he clamor'd from a casement, " run "  
To Katie somewhere in the walks below,  
" Run, Katie ! " Katie never ran : she moved  
To meet me, winding under woodbine bowers,  
A little flutter'd, with her eyelids down,  
Fresh apple-blossom, blushing for a boon.

' What was it ? less of sentiment than sense  
Had Katie ; not illiterate ; neither one  
Who dabbling in the fount of fictive tears,  
And nursed by mealy-mouth'd philanthropies,  
Divorce the Feeling from her mate the Deed,

' She told me. She and James had quarrell'd. Why ?  
What cause of quarrel ? None, she said, no cause ;  
James had no cause : but when I prest the cause,  
I learnt that James had flickering jealousies  
Which anger'd her. Who anger'd James ? I said.  
But Katie snatch'd her eyes at once from mine,  
And sketching with her slender pointed foot  
Some figure like a wizard's pentagram  
On garden gravel, let my query pass  
Unclaim'd, in flushing silence, till I ask'd  
If James were coming. " Coming every day,"  
She answer'd, " ever longing to explain,  
But evermore her father came across  
With some long-winded tale, and broke him short ;  
And James departed vext with him and her."  
How could I help her ? " Would I — was it wrong ? "  
(Claspt hands and that petitionary grace  
Of sweet seventeen subdued me ere she spoke)



“ O would I take her father for one hour, \*  
For one half-hour, and let him talk to me ! ”  
And even while she spoke, I saw where James  
Made toward us, like a wader in the surf,  
Beyond the brook, waist-deep in meadow-sweet.

‘ O Katie, what I suffer’d for your sake !  
For in I went, and call’d old Philip out  
To show the farm : full willingly he rose :  
He led me thro’ the short sweet-smelling lanes  
Of his wheat suburb, babbling as he went.  
He praised his land, his horses, his machines ;  
He praised his ploughs, his cows, his hogs, his dogs ;  
He praised his hens, his geese, his guinea-hens ;  
His pigeons, who in session on their roofs  
Approved him, bowing at their own deserts :  
Then from the plaintive mother’s teat he took  
Her blind and shuddering puppies, naming each,  
And naming those, his friends, for whom they were :  
Then crost the common into Darnley chase  
To show Sir Arthur’s deer. In copse and fern  
Twinkled the innumerable ear and tail.  
Then, seated on a serpent-rooted beech,  
He pointed out a pasturing colt, and said :  
“ That was the four-year-old I sold the Squire.”  
And there he told a long, long-winded tale  
Of how the Squire had seen the colt at grass,  
And how it was the thing his daughter wish’d,  
And how he sent the bailiff to the farm  
To learn the price, and what the price he ask’d,  
And how the bailiff swore that he was mad,  
But he stood firm ; and so the matter hung ;  
He gave them line : and five days after that  
He met the bailiff at the Golden Fleece,

Who then and there had offer'd something more,  
But he stood firm ; and so the matter hung ;  
He knew the man ; the colt would fetch its price ;  
He gave them line : and how by chance at last  
(It might be May or April, he forgot,  
The last of April or the first of May)  
He found the bailiff riding by the farm,  
And, talking from the point, he drew him in,  
And there he mellow'd all his heart with ale,  
Until they closed a bargain, hand in hand.

‘ Then, while I breathed in sight of haven, he,  
Poor fellow, could he help it ? recommenced,  
And ran thro’ all the coltish chronicle,  
Wild Will, Black Bess, Tantivy, Tallyho,  
Reform, White Rose, Bellerophon, the Jilt,  
Arbaces, and Phenomenon, and the rest,  
Till, not to die a listener, I arose,  
And with me Philip, talking still ; and so  
We turn’d our foreheads from the falling sun,  
And following our own shadows thrice as long  
As when they follow’d us from Philip’s door,  
Arrived, and found the sun of sweet content  
Re-risen in Katie’s eyes, and all things well.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,  
I slide by hazel covers ;  
I move the sweet forget-me-nots  
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,  
Among my skimming swallows ;  
I make the netted sunbeam dance  
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars  
In brambly wildernesses ;  
I linger by my shingly bars ;  
I loiter round my cresses ;

And out again I curve and flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on forever.

Yes, men may come and go ; and these are gone,  
All gone. My dearest brother, Edmund, sleeps,  
Not by the well-known stream and rustic spire,  
But unfamiliar Arno, and the dome  
Of Brunelleschi ; sleeps in peace : and he,  
Poor Philip, of all his lavish waste of words  
Remains the lean P. W. on his tomb :  
I scraped the lichen from it : Katie walks  
By the long wash of Australasian seas  
Far off, and holds her head to other stars,  
And breathes in converse seasons. All are gone.'

So Lawrence Aylmer, seated on a stile  
In the long hedge, and rolling in his mind  
Old waifs of rhyme, and bowing o'er the brook  
A tonsured head in middle age forlorn,  
Mused, and was mute. On a sudden a low breath  
Of tender air made tremble in the hedge  
The fragile bindweed-bells and briony rings ;  
And he look'd up. There stood a maiden near,  
Waiting to pass. In much amaze he stared  
On eyes a bashful azure, and on hair  
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell  
Divides threefold to show the fruit within :

Then, wondering, ask'd her 'Are you from the farm ?'  
'Yes' answer'd she. 'Pray stay a little : pardon me ;  
What do they call you ?' 'Katie.' 'That were strange.  
What surname ?' 'Willows.' 'No !' 'That is my  
name.'

'Indeed !' and here he look'd so self-perplext,  
That Katie laugh'd, and laughing blush'd, till he  
Laugh'd also, but as one before he wakes,  
Who feels a glimmering strangeness in his dream.  
Then looking at her ; 'Too happy, fresh and fair,  
Too fresh and fair in our sad world's best bloom,  
To be the ghost of one who bore your name  
About these meadows, twenty years ago.'

'Have you not heard ?' said Katie, 'we came back.  
We bought the farm we tenanted before.  
Am I so like her ? so they said on board.  
Sir, if you knew her in her English days,  
My mother, as it seems you did, the days  
That most she loves to talk of, come with me.  
My brother James is in the harvest-field :  
But she — you will be welcome — O, come in !'



## THE LETTERS.

## 1.

S TILL on the tower stood the vane,  
A black yew gloom'd the stagnant air,  
I peer'd athwart the chancel pane  
And saw the altar cold and bare.  
A clog of lead was round my feet,  
A band of pain across my brow ;  
'Cold altar, Heaven and earth shall meet  
Before you hear my marriage vow.'

## 2.

I turn'd and humm'd a bitter song  
That mock'd the wholesome human heart,  
And then we met in wrath and wrong,  
We met, but only meant to part.  
Full cold my greeting was and dry ;  
She faintly smiled, she hardly moved ;  
I saw with half-unconscious eye  
She wore the colors I approved.

## 3.

She took the little ivory chest,  
With half a sigh she turn'd the key,  
Then raised her head with lips comprest,  
And gave my letters back to me.  
And gave the trinkets and the rings,  
My gifts, when gifts of mine could please ;  
As looks a father on the things  
Of his dead son, I look'd on these.

## 4.

She told me all her friends had said ;  
I raged against the public liar ;  
She talk'd as if her love were dead,  
But in my words were seeds of fire.  
' No more of love ; your sex is known :  
I never will be twice deceived.  
Henceforth I trust the man alone,  
The woman cannot be believed.

## 5.

' Thro' slander, meanest spawn of Hell  
(And women's slander is the worst),  
And you, whom once I lov'd so well,  
Thro' you, my life will be accurst.'  
I spoke with heart, and heat and force,  
I shook her breast with vague alarms —  
Like torrents from a mountain source  
We rush'd into each other's arms.

## 6.

We parted : sweetly gleam'd the stars,  
And sweet the vapor-braided blue,  
Low breezes fann'd the belfry bars,  
As homeward by the church I drew.  
The very graves appear'd to smile,  
So fresh they rose in shadow'd swells ;  
' Dark porch ' I said ' and silent aisle  
There comes a sound of marriage bells.'



ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF  
WELLINGTON.

I.

BURY the Great Duke  
With an empire's lamentation,  
Let us bury the Great Duke  
To the noise of the mourning of a mighty nation,  
Mourning when their leaders fall,  
Warriors carry the warrior's pall,  
And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

2.

Where shall we lay the man whom we deplore?  
Here, in streaming London's central roar.  
Let the sound of those he wrought for,  
And the feet of those he fought for,  
Echo round his bones forevermore.

3.

Lead out the pageant : sad and slow,  
As fits an universal woe,  
Let the long long procession go,  
And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow,  
And let the mournful martial music blow ;  
The last great Englishman is low.

4.

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,  
Remembering all his greatness in the Past.

No more in soldier fashion will he greet  
With lifted hand the gazer in the street.  
O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute :  
Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,  
The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,  
Whole in himself, a common good.  
Mourn for the man of amplest influence,  
Yet clearest of ambitious crime,  
Our greatest yet with least pretence,  
Great in council and great in war,  
Foremost captain of his time,  
Rich in saving common-sense,  
And, as the greatest only are,  
In his simplicity sublime.  
O good gray head which all men knew, .  
O voice from which their omens all men drew,  
O iron nerve to true occasion true,  
O fall'n at length that tower of strength  
Which stood four-square to all the winds that blew !  
Such was he whom we deplore.  
The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.  
The great World-victor's victor will be seen no more.

## 5.

All is over and done :  
Render thanks to the Giver,  
England, for thy son.  
Let the bell be toll'd.  
Render thanks to the Giver,  
And render him to the mould.  
Under the cross of gold  
That shines over city and river,  
There he shall rest forever  
Among the wise and the bold.



Let the bell be toll'd :

And a reverent people behold

✓ The towering car, the sable steeds :

Bright let it be with his blazon'd deeds,

Dark in its funeral fold.

Let the bell be toll'd :

And a deeper knell in the heart be knoll'd ;

And the sound of the sorrowing anthem roll'd

Thro' the dome of the golden cross ;

And the volleying cannon thunder his loss ;

He knew their voices of old.

For many a time in many a clime

His captain's-ear has heard them boom

Bellowing victory, bellowing doom ;

When he with those deep voices wrought,

Guarding realms and kings from shame ;

With those deep voices our dead captain taught

The tyrant, and asserts his claim

In that dread sound to the great name,

Which he has worn so pure of blame,

In praise and in dispraise the same,

A man of well-attemper'd frame.

O civic muse, to such a name,

To such a name for ages long,

To such a name,

Preserve a broad approach of fame,

And ever-ringing avenues of song.

6.

Who is he that cometh, like an honor'd guest,

With banner and with music, with soldier and with priest,

With a nation weeping, and breaking on my rest ?

Mighty seaman, this is he

Was great by land as thou by sea.

Thine island loves thee well, thou famous man,  
The greatest sailor since our world began.  
Now, to the roll of muffled drums,  
To thee the greatest soldier comes ;  
For this is he  
Was great by land as thou by sea ;  
His foes were thine ; he kept us free ;  
O give him welcome, this is he,  
Worthy of our gorgeous rites,  
And worthy to be laid by thee ;  
For this is England's greatest son,  
He that gain'd a hundred fights,  
Nor ever lost an English gun ;  
This is he that far away  
Against the myriads of Assaye  
Clash'd with his fiery few and won ;  
And underneath another sun,  
Warring on a later day,  
Round affrighted Lisbon drew  
The treble works, the vast designs  
Of his labor'd rampart-lines,  
Where he greatly stood at bay,  
Whence he issued forth anew,  
And ever great and greater grew,  
Beating from the wasted vines  
Back to France her banded swarms,  
Back to France with countless blows,  
Till o'er the hills her eagles flew  
Past the Pyrenean pines,  
Follow'd up in valley and glen  
With blare of bugle, clamor of men,  
Roll of cannon and clash of arms,  
And England pouring on her foes.  
Such a war had such a close.

Again their ravening eagle rose  
In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadowing wings,  
And barking for the thrones of kings ;  
Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown  
On that loud sabbath shook the spoiler down ;  
A day of onsets of despair !  
Dash'd on every rocky square  
Their surging charges foam'd themselves away ;  
Last, the Prussian trumpet blew ;  
Thro' the long-tormented air  
Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,  
And down we swept and charged and overthrew.  
So great a soldier taught us there,  
What long-enduring hearts could do  
In that world's-earthquake, Waterloo !  
Mighty seaman, tender and true,  
And pure as he from taint of craven guile,  
O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,  
O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,  
If aught of things that here befall  
Touch a spirit among things divine,  
If love of country move thee there at all,  
Be glad, because his bones are laid by thine !  
And thro' the centuries let a people's voice  
In full acclaim,  
A people's voice,  
The proof and echo of all human fame,  
A people's voice, when they rejoice  
At civic revel and pomp and game,  
Attest their great commander's claim  
With honor, honor, honor, honor to him,  
Eternal honor to his name.

## 7.

A people's voice ! we are a people yet.  
Tho' all men else their nobler dreams forget  
Confused by brainless mobs and lawless Powers ;  
Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly set  
His Saxon in blown seas and storming showers,  
We have a voice, with which to pay the debt  
Of boundless love and reverence and regret  
To those great men who fought, and kept it ours.  
And keep it ours, O God, from brute control ;  
O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye, the soul  
Of Europe, keep our noble England whole,  
And save the one true seed of freedom sown  
Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,  
That sober freedom out of which there springs  
Our loyal passion for our temperate kings ;  
For, saving that, ye help to save mankind  
Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,  
And drill the raw world for the march of mind,  
Till crowds at length be sane and crowns be just.  
But wink no more in slothful overtrust.  
Remember him who led your hosts ;  
He bade you guard the sacred coasts.  
Your cannons moulder on the seaward wall ;  
His voice is silent in your council-hall  
Forever ; and whatever tempests lour  
Forever silent ; even if they broke  
In thunder, silent ; yet remember all  
He spoke among you, and the Man who spoke ;  
Who never sold the truth to serve the hour,  
Nor palter'd with Eternal God for power ;  
Who let the turbid streams of rumor flow  
Thro' either babbling world of high and low ;  
Whose life was work, whose language rife

With rugged maxims hewn from life ;  
Who never spoke against a foe ;  
Whose eighty winters freeze with one rebuke  
All great self-seekers trampling on the right :  
Truth-teller was our England's Alfred named ;  
Truth-lover was our English Duke ;  
Whatever record leap to light  
He never shall be shamed.

## 8.

Lo, the leader in these glorious wars  
Now to glorious burial slowly borne,  
Follow'd by the brave of other lands,  
He, on whom from both her open hands  
Lavish Honor shower'd all her stars,  
And affluent Fortune emptied all her horn.  
Yea, let all good things await  
Him who cares not to be great,  
But as he saves or serves the state.  
Not once or twice in our rough island-story,  
The path of duty was the way to glory :  
He that walks it, only thirsting  
For the right, and learns to deaden  
Love of self, before his journey closes,  
He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting  
Into glossy purples, which outredde  
All voluptuous garden-roses.  
Not once or twice in our fair island-story,  
The path of duty was the way to glory :  
He, that ever following her commands,  
On with toil of heart and knees and hands,  
Thro' the long gorge to the far light has won  
His path upward, and prevail'd,  
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled

Are close upon the shining table-lands  
To which our God Himself is moon and sun.  
Such was he : his work is done.  
But while the races of mankind endure,  
Let his great example stand  
Colossal, seen of every land,  
And keep the soldier firm, the statesman pure ;  
Till in all lands and thro' all human story  
The path of duty be the way to glory :  
And let the land whose hearths he saved from shame  
For many and many an age proclaim  
At civic revel and pomp and game,  
And when the long-illuminated cities flame,  
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,  
With honor, honor, honor, honor to him,  
Eternal honor to his name.

## 9.

Peace, his triumph will be sung  
By some yet unmoulded tongue  
Far on in summers that we shall not see :  
Peace, it is a day of pain  
For one about whose patriarchal knee  
Late the little children clung :  
O peace, it is a day of pain  
For one, upon whose hand and heart and brain  
Once the weight and fate of Europe hung.  
Ours the pain, be his the gain !  
More than is of man's degree  
Must be with us, watching here  
At this, our great solemnity.  
Whom we see not we revere.  
We revere, and we refrain  
From talk of battles loud and vain,

And brawling memories all too free  
 For such a wise humility  
 As befits a solemn fane :  
 We revere, and while we hear  
 The tides of Music's golden sea  
 Setting toward eternity,  
 Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,  
 Until we doubt not that for one so true  
 There must be other nobler work to do  
 Than when he fought at Waterloo,  
 And Victor he must ever be.  
 For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill  
 And break the shore, and evermore  
 Make and break, and work their will ;  
 Tho' world on world in myriad myriads roll  
 Round us, each with different powers,  
 And other forms of life than ours,  
 What know we greater than the soul ?  
 On God and Godlike men we build our trust.  
 Hush, the Dead March wails in the people's ears :  
 The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs and tears :  
 The black earth yawns : the mortal disappears ;  
 Ashes to ashes, dust to dust ;  
 He is gone who seem'd so great. —  
 Gone ; but nothing can bereave him  
 Of the force he made his own  
 Being here, and we believe him  
 Something far advanced in State,  
 And that he wears a truer crown  
 Than any wreath that man can weave him.  
 But speak no more of his renown,  
 Lay your earthly fancies down,  
 And in the vast cathedral leave him.  
 God accept him, Christ receive him.

## THE DAISY.

WRITTEN AT EDINBURGH.

O LOVE, what hours were thine and mine,  
In lands of palm and southern pine ;  
In lands of palm, of orange-blossom,  
Of olive, aloe, and maize and vine.

What Roman strength Turbìa show'd  
In ruin, by the mountain road ;  
How like a gem, beneath, the city  
Of little Monaco, basking, glow'd.

How richly down the rocky dell  
The torrent vineyard streaming fell  
To meet the sun and sunny waters,  
That only heaved with a summer swell.

What slender campanili grew  
By bays, the peacock's neck in hue ;  
Where, here and there, on sandy beaches  
A milky-bell'd amaryllis blew.

How young Columbus seem'd to rove,  
Yet present in his natal grove,  
Now watching high on mountain cornice,  
And steering, now, from a purple cove,

Now pacing mute by ocean's rim ;  
Till, in a narrow street and dim,  
I stay'd the wheels at Cogoletto,  
And drank, and loyally drank to him.



Nor knew we well what pleased us most,  
Not the clipt palm of which they boast ;  
    But distant color, happy hamlet,  
A moulder'd citadel on the coast,

Or tower, or high hill-convent, seen  
A light amid its olives green ;  
    Or olive-hoary cape in ocean ;  
Or rosy blossom in hot ravine,

Where oleanders flush'd the bed  
Of silent torrents, gravel-spread ;  
    And, crossing, oft we saw the glisten  
Of ice, far up on a mountain head.

We loved that hall, tho' white and cold,  
Those niched shapes of noble mould,  
    A princely people's awful princes,  
The grave, severe Genovese of old.

At Florence too what golden hours,  
In those long galleries, were ours ;  
    What drives about the fresh Cascinè,  
Or walks in Boboli's ducal bowers.

In bright vignettes, and each complete,  
Of tower or duomo, sunny-sweet,  
    Or palace, how the city glitter'd,  
Thro' cypress avenues, at our feet.

But when we crost the Lombard plain  
Remember what a plague of rain ;  
    Of rain at Reggio, rain at Parma ;  
At Lodi, rain, Piacenza, rain.

And stern and sad (so rare the smiles  
Of sunlight) look'd the Lombard piles ;  
Porch-pillars on the lion resting,  
And sombre, old, colonnaded aisles.

O Milan, O the chanting quires,  
The giant windows' blazon'd fires,  
The height, the space, the gloom, the glory !  
A mount of marble, a hundred spires !

I climb'd the roofs at break of day ;  
Sun-smitten Alps before me lay.

I stood among the silent statues,  
And statued pinnacles, mute as they.

How faintly-flush'd, how phantom-fair,  
Was Monte Rosa, hanging there  
A thousand shadowy-pencill'd valleys  
And snowy dells in a golden air.

Remember how we came at last  
To Como ; shower and storm and blast  
Had blown the lake beyond his limit,  
And all was flooded ; and how we past

From Como, when the light was gray,  
And in my head, for half the day,  
The rich Virgilian rustic measure  
Of Lari Maxume, all the way,

Like ballad-burthen music, kept,  
As on the Lariano crept  
To that fair port below the castle  
Of Queen Theodolind, where we slept ;

Or hardly slept, but watch'd awake  
A cypress in the moonlight shake,  
    The moonlight touching o'er a terrace  
One tall Agavè above the lake.

What more ? we took our last adieu,  
And up the snowy Splugen drew,  
    But ere we reach'd the highest summit  
I pluck'd a daisy, I gave it you.

It told of England then to me,  
And now it tells of Italy.  
    O love, we two shall go no longer  
To lands of summer across the sea ;

So dear a life your arms enfold  
Whose crying is a cry for gold :  
    Yet here to-night in this dark city,  
When ill and weary, alone and cold,

I found, tho' crush'd to hard and dry,  
This nurseling of another sky  
    Still in the little book you lent me,  
And where you tenderly laid it by :

And I forgot the clouded Forth,  
The gloom that saddens Heaven and Earth,  
    The bitter east, the misty summer  
And gray metropolis of the North.

Perchance, to lull the throbs of pain,  
Perchance, to charm a vacant brain,  
    Perchance, to dream you still beside me,  
My fancy fled to the South again.

## TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE.

COME, when no graver cares employ,  
God-father, come and see your boy :  
Your presence will be sun in winter,  
Making the little one leap for joy.

For, being of that honest few,  
Who give the Fiend himself his due,  
Should eighty-thousand college-councils  
Thunder 'Anathema,' friend, at you ;

Should all our churchmen foam in spite  
At you, so careful of the right,  
Yet one lay-hearth would give you welcome  
(Take it and come) to the Isle of Wight ;

Where, far from noise and smoke of town,  
I watch the twilight falling brown  
All round a careless-order'd garden  
Close to the ridge of a noble down.

You'll have no scandal while you dine,  
But honest talk and wholesome wine,  
And only hear the magpie gossip  
Garrulous under a roof of pine :

For groves of pine on either hand,  
To break the blast of winter, stand ;  
And further on, the hoary Channel  
Tumbles a breaker on chalk and sand ;

Where, if below the milky steep  
Some ship of battle slowly creep,  
And on thro' zones of light and shadow  
Glimmer away to the lonely deep,

We might discuss the Northern sin  
Which made a selfish war begin ;  
Dispute the claims, arrange the chances ;  
Emperor, Ottoman, which shall win :

Or whether war's avenging rod  
Shall lash all Europe into blood ;  
Till you should turn to dearer matters,  
Dear to the man that is dear to God ;

How best to help the slender store,  
How mend the dwellings, of the poor ;  
How gain in life, as life advances,  
Valor and charity more and more.

Come, Maurice, come : the lawn as yet  
Is hoar with rime, or spongy-wet ;  
But when the wreath of March has blossom'd,  
Crocus, anemone, violet,

Or later, pay one visit here,  
For those are few we hold as dear ;  
Nor pay but one, but come for many,  
Many and many a happy year.

January, 1854.



## WILL.

## I.

O WELL for him whose will is strong !  
He suffers, but he will not suffer long ;  
He suffers, but he cannot suffer wrong :  
For him nor moves the loud world's random' mock,  
Nor all Calamity's hugest waves confound,  
Who seems a promontory of rock,  
That, compass'd round with turbulent sound,  
In middle ocean meets the surging shock,  
Tempest-buffeted, citadel-crown'd.

## 2.

But ill for him who, bettering not with time,  
Corrupts the strength of heaven-descended Will,  
And ever weaker grows thro' acted crime,  
Or seeming-genial venial fault,  
Recurring and suggesting still !  
He seems as one whose footsteps halt,  
Toiling in immeasurable sand,  
And o'er a weary, sultry land,  
Far beneath a blazing vault,  
Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous hill,  
The city sparkles like a grain of salt.



THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE.

I.

HALF a league, half a league,  
Half a league onward,  
All in the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.  
“Forward, the Light Brigade !  
“Charge for the guns !” he said :  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

2.

“Forward, the Light Brigade !”  
Was there a man dismay'd ?  
Not tho' the soldier knew  
Some one had blunder'd :  
Theirs not to make reply,  
Theirs not to reason why,  
Theirs but to do and die,  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

3.

Cannon to right of them,  
Cannon to left of them,  
Cannon in front of them  
Volley'd and thunder'd ;  
Storm'd at with shot and shell,  
Boldly they rode and well,  
Into the jaws of Death,  
Into the mouth of Hell  
Rode the six hundred.

## 4.

Flash'd all their sabres bare,  
 Flash'd as they turn'd in air,  
 Sabring the gunners there,  
 Charging an army, while  
     All the world wonder'd :  
 Plunged in the battery-smoke,  
 Right thro' the line they broke ;  
 Cossack and Russian  
 Reel'd from the sabre-stroke,  
     Shatter'd and sunder'd.  
 Then they rode back, but not  
     Not the six hundred.

## 5.

Cannon to right of them,  
 Cannon to left of them,  
 Cannon behind them  
     Volley'd and thunder'd ;  
 Storm'd at with shot and shell,  
 While horse and hero fell,  
 They that had fought so well  
 Came thro' the jaws of Death  
 Back from the mouth of Hell,  
 All that was left of them,  
     Left of six hundred.

## 6.

When can their glory fade ?  
 O the wild charge they made !  
     All the world wonder'd.  
 Honor the charge they made !  
 Honor the Light Brigade,  
     Noble six hundred !





# IDYLLS OF THE KING.

'Flos Regum Arthurus.'

JOSEPH OF EXETER.



VOL. II.

N





## DEDICATION.

THESE to His Memory — since he held them dear,  
Perchance as finding there unconsciously  
Some image of himself — I dedicate,  
I dedicate, I consecrate with tears —  
These Idylls.

And indeed He seems to me  
Scarce other than my own ideal knight,  
' Who revered his conscience as his king ;  
Whose glory was, redressing human wrong ;  
Who spake no slander, no, nor listen'd to it ;  
Who loved one only and who clave to her —'  
Her — over all whose realms to their last isle,  
Commingled with the gloom of imminent war,  
The shadow of His loss moved like eclipse,  
Darkening the world. We have lost him : he is gone :  
We know him now : all narrow jealousies  
Are silent ; and we see him as he moved,  
How modest, kindly, all-accomplish'd, wise,  
With what sublime repression of himself,  
And in what limits, and how tenderly ;  
Not swaying to this faction or to that ;  
Not making his high place the lawless perch  
Of wing'd ambitions, nor a vantage-ground

For pleasure ; but thro' all this tract of years  
Wearing the white flower of a blameless life,  
Before a thousand peering littlenesses,  
In that fierce light which beats upon a throne,  
And blackens every blot : for where is he,  
Who dares foreshadow for an only son  
A lovelier life, a more unstain'd, than his ?  
Or how should England dreaming of *his* sons  
Hope more for these than some inheritance  
Of such a life, a heart, a mind as thine,  
Thou noble Father of her Kings to be,  
Laborious for her people and her poor —  
Voice in the rich dawn of an ampler day —  
Far-sighted summoner of War and Waste  
To fruitful strifes and rivalries of peace —  
Sweet nature gilded by the gracious gleam  
Of letters, dear to Science, dear to Art,  
Dear to thy land and ours, a Prince indeed,  
Beyond all titles, and a household name,  
Hereafter, thro' all times, Albert the Good.

Break not, O woman's-heart, but still endure ;  
Break not, for thou art Royal, but endure,  
Remembering all the beauty of that star  
Which shone so close beside Thee, that ye made  
One light together, but has past and left  
The Crown a lonely splendor.

May all love,  
His love, unseen but felt, o'ershadow Thee,  
The love of all Thy sons encompass Thee,  
The love of all Thy daughters cherish Thee,  
The love of all Thy people comfort Thee,  
Till God's love set Thee at his side again !



## ENID.

THE brave Geraint, a knight of Arthur's court,  
A tributary prince of Devon, one  
Of that great order of the Table Round,  
Had married Enid, Yniol's only child,  
And loved her, as he loved the light of Heaven.  
And as the light of Heaven varies, now  
At sunrise, now at sunset, now by night  
With moon and trembling stars, so loved Geraint  
To make her beauty vary day by day,  
In crimsons and in purples and in gems.  
And Enid, but to please her husband's eye,  
Who first had found and loved her in a state  
Of broken fortunes, daily fronted him  
In some fresh splendor ; and the Queen herself,  
Grateful to Prince Geraint for service done,  
Loved her, and often with her own white hands  
Array'd and deck'd her, as the loveliest,  
Next after her own self, in all the court.  
And Enid loved the Queen, and with true heart  
Adored her, as the stateliest and the best  
And loveliest of all women upon earth.

And seeing them so tender and so close,  
Long in their common love rejoiced Geraint.  
But when a rumor rose about the Queen,  
Touching her guilty love for Lancelot,  
Tho' yet there lived no proof, nor yet was heard  
The world's loud whisper breaking into storm,  
Not less Geraint believed it ; and there fell  
A horror on him, lest his gentle wife,  
Thro' that great tenderness for Guinevere,  
Had suffer'd, or should suffer any taint  
In nature : wherefore going to the king,  
He made this pretext, that his principedom lay  
Close on the borders of a territory,  
Wherein were bandit earls, and caitiff knights,  
Assassins, and all flyers from the hand  
Of Justice, and whatever loathes a law :  
And therefore, till the king himself should please  
To cleanse this common sewer of all his realm,  
He craved a fair permission to depart,  
And there defend his marches ; and the king  
Mused for a little on his plea, but, last,  
Allowing it, the Prince and Enid rode,  
And fifty knights rode with them, to the shores  
Of Severn, and they past to their own land ;  
Where, thinking, that if ever yet was wife  
True to her lord, mine shall be so to me,  
He compass'd her with sweet observances  
And worship, never leaving her, and grew  
Forgetful of his promise to the king,  
Forgetful of the falcon and the hunt,  
Forgetful of the tilt and tournament,  
Forgetful of his glory and his name,  
Forgetful of his principedom and its cares.  
And this forgetfulness was hateful to her.

And by and by the people, when they met  
In twos and threes, or fuller companies,  
Began to scoff and jeer and babble of him  
As of a prince whose manhood was all gone,  
And molten down in mere uxoriousness.  
And this she gather'd from the people's eyes :  
This too the women who attired her head,  
To please her, dwelling on his boundless love,  
Told Enid, and they sadden'd her the more :  
And day by day she thought to tell Geraint,  
But could not out of bashful delicacy ;  
While he that watch'd her sadden, was the more  
Suspicious that her nature had a taint.

At last, it chanced that on a summer morn  
(They sleeping each by other) the new sun  
Beat thro' the blindless casement of the room,  
And heated the strong warrior in his dreams ;  
Who, moving, cast the coverlet aside,  
And bared the knotted column of his throat;  
The massive square of his heroic breast,  
And arms on which the standing muscle sloped,  
As slopes a wild brook o'er a little stone,  
Running too vehemently to break upon it.  
And Enid woke and sat beside the couch,  
Admiring him, and thought within herself,  
Was ever man so grandly made as he ?  
Then, like a shadow, past the people's talk  
And accusation of uxoriousness  
Across her mind, and bowing over him,  
Low to her own heart piteously she said :

' O noble breast and all-puissant arms,  
Am I the cause, I the poor cause that men

Reproach you, saying all your force is gone ?  
I *am* the cause because I dare not speak  
And tell him what I think and what they say.  
And yet I hate that he should linger here ;  
I cannot love my lord and not his name.  
Far liever had I gird his harness on him,  
And ride with him to battle and stand by,  
And watch his mightful hand striking great blows  
At caitiffs and at wrongers of the world.  
Far better were I laid in the dark earth,  
Not hearing any more his noble voice,  
Not to be folded more in these dear arms,  
And darken'd from the high light in his eyes,  
Than that my lord thro' me should suffer shame.  
Am I so bold, and could I so stand by,  
And see my dear lord wounded in the strife,  
Or may be pierced to death before mine eyes,  
And yet not dare to tell him what I think,  
And how men slur him, saying all his force  
Is melted into mere effeminacy ?  
O me, I fear that I am no true wife.'

Half inwardly, half audibly she spoke,  
And the strong passion in her made her weep  
True tears upon his broad and naked breast,  
And these awoke him, and by great mischance  
He heard but fragments of her later words,  
And that she fear'd she was not a true wife.  
And then he thought, ' In spite of all my care,  
For all my pains, poor man, for all my pains,  
She is not faithful to me, and I see her  
Weeping for some gay knight in Arthur's hall.'  
Then tho' he loved and revered her too much  
To dream she could be guilty of foul act,



Right thro' his manful breast darted the pang  
That makes a man, in the sweet face of her  
Whom he loves most, lonely and miserable.  
At this he hurl'd his huge limbs out of bed,  
And shook his drowsy squire awake and cried,  
'My charger and her palfrey,' then to her,  
'I will ride forth into the wilderness ;  
For tho' it seems my spurs are yet to win,  
I have not fall'n so low as some would wish.  
And you, put on your worst and meanest dress  
And ride with me.' And Enid ask'd, amazed,  
'If Enid errs, let Enid learn her fault.'  
But he, 'I charge you, ask not but obey.'  
Then she bethought her of a faded silk,  
A faded mantle and a faded veil,  
And moving toward a cedarn cabinet,  
Wherein she kept them folded reverently  
With sprigs of summer laid between the folds,  
She took them, and array'd herself therein,  
Remembering when first he came on her  
Drest in that dress, and how he loved her in it,  
And all her foolish fears about the dress,  
And all his journey to her, as himself  
Had told her, and their coming to the court.

For Arthur on the Whitsuntide before  
Held court at old Caerleon upon Usk.  
There on a day, he sitting high in hall,  
Before him came a forester of Dean,  
Wet from the woods, with notice of a hart  
Taller than all his fellows, milky-white,  
First seen that day : these things he told the king.  
Then the good king gave order to let blow  
His horns for hunting on the morrow morn.

And when the Queen petition'd for his leave  
To see the hunt, allow'd it easily.  
So with the morning all the court were gone.  
But Guinevere lay late into the morn,  
Lost in sweet dreams, and dreaming of her love  
For Lancelot, and forgetful of the hunt ;  
But rose at last, a single maiden with her,  
Took horse, and forded Usk, and gain'd the wood ;  
There, on a little knoll beside it, stay'd  
Waiting to hear the hounds ; but heard instead  
A sudden sound of hoofs, for Prince Geraint,  
Late also, wearing neither hunting-dress  
Nor weapon, save a golden-hilted brand,  
Came quickly flashing thro' the shallow ford  
Behind them, and so gallop'd up the knoll.  
A purple scarf, at either end whereof  
There swung an apple of the purest gold,  
Sway'd round about him, as he gallop'd up  
To join them, glancing like a dragon-fly  
In summer suit and silks of holiday.  
Low bow'd the tributary Prince, and she,  
Sweetly and statelily, and with all grace  
Of womanhood and queenhood, answer'd him :  
'Late, late, Sir Prince,' she said, 'later than we !'  
'Yea, noble Queen,' he answer'd, 'and so late  
That I but come like you to see the hunt,  
Not join it.' 'Therefore wait with me,' she said ;  
'For on this little knoll, if anywhere,  
There is good chance that we shall hear the hounds :  
Here often they break covert at our feet.'

And while they listen'd for the distant hunt,  
And chiefly for the baying of Cavall,  
King Arthur's hound of deepest mouth, there rode

Full slowly by a knight, lady, and dwarf ;  
Whereof the dwarf lagg'd latest, and the knight  
Had visor up, and show'd a youthful face,  
Imperious, and of haughtiest lineaments.  
And Guinevere, not mindful of his face  
In the king's hall, desired his name, and sent  
Her maiden to demand it of the dwarf ;  
Who being vicious, old, and irritable,  
And doubling all his master's vice of pride,  
Made answer sharply that she should not know.  
' Then will I ask it of himself,' she said.  
' Nay, by my faith, thou shalt not,' cried the dwarf ;  
' Thou art not worthy ev'n to speak of him ;'  
And when she put her horse toward the knight,  
Struck at her with his whip, and she return'd  
Indignant to the Queen ; at which Geraint  
Exclaiming, ' Surely I will learn the name,'  
Made sharply to the dwarf, and ask'd it of him,  
Who answer'd as before ; and when the Prince  
Had put his horse in motion toward the knight,  
Struck at him with his whip, and cut his cheek.  
The Prince's blood spirted upon the scarf,  
Dyeing it ; and his quick, instinctive hand  
Caught at the hilt, as to abolish him :  
But he, from his exceeding manfulness  
And pure nobility of temperament,  
Wroth to be wroth at such a worm, refrain'd  
From ev'n a word, and so returning said :

' I will avenge this insult, noble Queen,  
Done in your maiden's person to yourself :  
And I will track this vermin to their earths :  
For tho' I ride unarm'd, I do not doubt  
To find, at some place I shall come at, arms

On loan, or else for pledge ; and, being found,  
Then will I fight him, and will break his pride,  
And on the third day, will again be here,  
So that I be not fall'n in fight. Farewell.'

'Farewell, fair Prince,' answer'd the stately Queen.  
'Be prosperous in this journey, as in all ;  
And may you light on all things that you love,  
And live to wed with her whom first you love :  
But ere you wed with any, bring your bride,  
And I, were she the daughter of a king,  
Yea, tho' she were a beggar from the hedge,  
Will clothe her for her bridals like the sun.'

And Prince Geraint, now thinking that he heard  
The noble hart at bay, now the far horn,  
A little vext at losing of the hunt,  
A little at the vile occasion, rode,  
By ups and downs, thro' many a grassy glade  
And valley, with fixt eye following the three.  
At last they issued from the world of wood,  
And climb'd upon a fair and even ridge,  
And show'd themselves against the sky, and sank.  
And thither came Geraint, and underneath  
Beheld the long street of a little town  
In a long valley, on one side of which,  
White from the mason's hand, a fortress rose ;  
And on one side a castle in decay,  
Beyond a bridge that spann'd a dry ravine :  
And out of town and valley came a noise  
As of a broad brook o'er a shingly bed  
Brawling, or like a clamor of the rooks  
At distance, ere they settle for the night.

And onward to the fortress rode the three,  
And enter'd, and were lost behind the walls.  
'So,' thought Geraint, 'I have track'd him to his earth.'  
And down the long street riding wearily,  
Found every hostel full, and everywhere  
Was hammer laid to hoof, and the hot hiss  
And bustling whistle of the youth who scour'd  
His master's armor; and of such a one  
He ask'd, 'What means the tumult in the town?'  
Who told him, scouring still 'The sparrow-hawk!'  
Then riding close behind an ancient churl,  
Who, smitten by the dusty sloping beam,  
Went sweating underneath a sack of corn,  
Ask'd yet once more what meant the hubbub here?  
Who answer'd gruffly, 'Ugh! the sparrow-hawk.'  
Then riding further past an armorer's,  
Who, with back turn'd, and bow'd above his work,  
Sat riveting a helmet on his knee,  
He put the self-same query, but the man  
Not turning round, nor looking at him, said:  
'Friend, he that labors for the sparrow-hawk  
Has little time for idle questioners.'  
Whereat Geraint flash'd into sudden spleen:  
'A thousand pips eat up your sparrow-hawk!  
Tits, wrens, and all wing'd nothings peck him dead!  
Ye think the rustic cackle of your bourg  
The murmur of the world! What is it to me?  
O wretched set of sparrows, one and all,  
Who pipe of nothing but of sparrow-hawks!  
Speak, if you be not like the rest, hawk-mad,  
Where can I get me harborage for the night?  
And arms, arms, arms to fight my enemy? Speak!'  
At this the armorer turning all amazed  
And seeing one so gay in purple silks,

Came forward with the helmet yet in hand  
And answer'd, 'Pardon me, O stranger knight ;  
We hold a tourney here to-morrow morn,  
And there is scanty time for half the work.  
Arms ? truth ! I know not : all are wanted here,  
Harborage ? truth, good truth, I know not, save,  
It may be, at Earl Yniol's, o'er the bridge  
Yonder.' He spoke and fell to work again.

Then rode Geraint, a little spleenful yet,  
Across the bridge that spann'd the dry ravine.  
There musing sat the hoary-headed Earl,  
(His dress a suit of fray'd magnificence,  
Once fit for feasts of ceremony) and said :  
'Whither, fair son ?' to whom Geraint replied,  
'O friend, I seek a harborage for the night.'  
Then Yniol, 'Enter therefore and partake  
The slender entertainment of a house  
Once rich, now poor, but ever open-door'd.'  
'Thanks, venerable friend,' replied Geraint ;  
'So that you do not serve me sparrow-hawks  
For supper, I will enter, I will eat  
With all the passion of a twelve hours' fast.'  
Then sigh'd and smiled the hoary-headed Earl,  
And answer'd, 'Graver cause than yours is mine  
To curse this hedgerow thief, the sparrow-hawk :  
But in, go in ; for, save yourself desire it,  
We will not touch upon him ev'n in jest.'

Then rode Geraint into the castle court,  
His charger trampling many a prickly star  
Of sprouted thistle on the broken stones.  
He look'd and saw that all was ruinous.  
Here stood a shatter'd archway plumed with fern ;

And here had fall'n a great part of a tower,  
Whole, like a crag that tumbles from the cliff,  
And like a crag was gay with wilding flowers :  
And high above a piece of turret stair,  
Worn by the feet that now were silent, wound  
Bare to the sun, and monstrous ivy-stems  
Claspt the gray walls with hairy-fibred arms,  
And suck'd the joining of the stones, and look'd  
A knot, beneath, of snakes, aloft, a grove.

And while he waited in the castle court,  
The voice of Enid, Yniol's daughter, rang  
Clear thro' the open casement of the Hall,  
Singing ; and as the sweet voice of a bird,  
Heard by the lander in a lonely isle,  
Moves him to think what kind of bird it is  
That sings so delicately clear, and make  
Conjecture of the plumage and the form ;  
So the sweet voice of Enid moved Geraint ;  
And made him like a man abroad at morn  
When first the liquid note beloved of men  
Comes flying over many a windy wave  
To Britain, and in April suddenly  
Breaks from a coppice gemm'd with green and red,  
And he suspends his converse with a friend,  
Or it may be the labor of his hands,  
To think or say, ' there is the nightingale ; '  
So fared it with Geraint, who thought and said,  
' Here, by God's grace, is the one voice for me.'

It chanced the song that Enid sang was one  
Of Fortune and her wheel, and Enid sang :

' Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel and lower the proud ;



Turn thy wild wheel thro' sunshine, storm, and cloud ;  
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate.

' Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel with smile or frown ;  
With that wild wheel we go not up or down ;  
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great.

' Smile and we smile, the lords of many lands ;  
Frown and we smile, the lords of our own hands ;  
For man is man and master of his fate.

' Turn, turn thy wheel above the staring crowd ;  
Thy wheel and thou are shadows in the cloud ;  
Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate.'

' Hark, by the bird's song you may learn the nest'  
Said Yniol ; ' Enter quickly.' Entering then,  
Right o'er a mount of newly-fallen stones,  
The dusky-rafter'd many-cobweb'd Hall,  
He found an ancient dame in dim brocade ;  
And near her, like a blossom vermeil-white,  
That lightly breaks a faded flower-sheath,  
Moved the fair Enid, all in faded silk,  
Her daughter. In a moment thought Geraint,  
' Here by God's rood is the one maid for me.'  
But none spake word except the hoary Earl :  
' Enid, the good knight's horse stands in the court ;  
Take him to stall, and give him corn, and then  
Go to the town and buy us flesh and wine ;  
And we will make us merry as we may.  
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great.'

He spake : the Prince, as Enid past him, fain  
To follow, strode a stride, but Yniol caught



- His purple scarf, and held, and said 'Forbear !  
Rest ! the good house, tho' ruin'd, O my Son,  
Endures not that her guest should serve himself.'  
And reverencing the custom of the house  
Geraint, from utter courtesy, forbore.

So Enid took his charger to the stall ;  
And after went her way across the bridge,  
And reach'd the town, and while the Prince and Earl  
Yet spoke together, came again with one,  
A youth, that following with a costrel bore  
The means of goodly welcome, flesh and wine.  
And Enid brought sweet cakes to make them cheer,  
And in her veil enfolded, manchet bread.  
And then, because their hall must also serve  
For kitchen, boil'd the flesh, and spread the board,  
And stood behind, and waited on the three.  
And seeing her so sweet and serviceable,  
Geraint had longing in him evermore  
To stoop and kiss the tender little thumb,  
That crost the trencher as she laid it down :  
But after all had eaten, then Geraint,  
For now the wine made summer in his veins,  
Let his eye rove in following, or rest  
On Enid at her lowly handmaid-work,  
Now here, now there, about the dusky hall ;  
Then suddenly address the hoary Earl :

' Fair Host and Earl, I pray your courtesy ;  
This sparrow-hawk, what is he, tell me of him.  
His name ? but no, good faith, I will not have it :  
For if he be the knight whom late I saw  
Ride into that new fortress by your town,  
White from the mason's hand, then have I sworn

From his his own lips to have it — I am Geraint  
Of Devon — for this morning when the Queen  
Sent her own maiden to demand the name,  
His dwarf, a vicious under-shapen thing,  
Struck at her with his whip, and she return'd  
Indignant to the Queen ; and then I swore  
That I would track this caitiff to his hold,  
And fight and break his pride, and have it of him.  
And all unarm'd I rode, and thought to find  
Arms in your town, where all the men are mad ;  
They take the rustic murmur of their bourg  
For the great wave that echoes round the world ;  
They would not hear me speak : but if you know  
Where I can light on arms, or if yourself  
Should have them, tell me, seeing I have sworn  
That I will break his pride and learn his name,  
Avenging this great insult done the Queen.'

Then cried Earl Yniol. ' Art thou he indeed,  
Geraint, a name far-sounded among men  
For noble deeds ? and truly I, when first  
I saw you moving by me on the bridge,  
Felt you were somewhat, yea and by your state  
And presence might have guess'd you one of those  
That eat in Arthur's hall at Camelot.  
Nor speak I now from foolish flattery ;  
For this dear child hath often heard me praise  
Your feats of arms, and often when I paused  
Hath ask'd again, and ever loved to hear ;  
So grateful is the noise of noble deeds  
To noble hearts who see but acts of wrong :  
O never yet had woman such a pair  
Of suitors as this maiden ; first Limours,  
A creature wholly given to brawls and wine,

Drunk even when he woo'd ; and be he dead  
I know not, but he past to the wild land.  
The second was your foe, the sparrow-hawk,  
My curse, my nephew, — I will not let his name  
Slip from my lips if I can help it — he,  
When I that knew him fierce and turbulent  
Refused her to him, then his pride awoke ;  
And since the proud man often is the mean,  
He sow'd a slander in the common ear,  
Affirming that his father left him gold,  
And in my charge, which was not render'd to him ;  
Bribed with large promises the men who served  
About my person, the more easily  
Because my means were somewhat broken into  
Thro' open doors and hospitality ;  
Raised my own town against me in the night  
Before my Enid's birthday, sack'd my house ;  
From mine own earldom foully ousted me ;  
Built that new fort to overawe my friends,  
For truly there are those who love me yet ;  
And keeps me in this ruinous castle here,  
Where doubtless he would put me soon to death,  
But that his pride too much despises me :  
And I myself sometimes despise myself ;  
For I have let men be, and have their way ;  
And much too gentle, have not used my power :  
Nor know I whether I be very base  
Or very manful, whether very wise  
Or very foolish ; only this I know,  
That whatsoever evil happen to me,  
I seem to suffer nothing heart or limb,  
But can endure it all most patiently.'

' Well said, true heart,' replied Geraint, ' but arms :

That if, as I suppose, your nephew fights  
In next day's tourney I may break his pride.'

And Yniol answer'd 'Arms, indeed, but old  
And rusty, old and rusty, Prince Geraint,  
Are mine, and therefore at your asking, yours.  
But in this tournament can no man tilt,  
Except the lady he loves best be there.  
Two forks are fixt into the meadow ground,  
And over these is laid a silver wand,  
And over that is placed the sparrow-hawk,  
The prize of beauty for the fairest there.  
And this, what knight soever be in field  
Lays claim to for the lady at his side,  
And tilts with my good nephew thereupon,  
Who being apt at arms and big of bone  
Has ever won it for the lady with him,  
And toppling over all antagonism  
Has earn'd himself the name of sparrow-hawk.  
But you, that have no lady, cannot fight.'

To whom Geraint with eyes all bright replied,  
Leaning a little toward him, 'Your leave !  
Let *me* lay lance in rest, O noble host,  
For this dear child, because I never saw,  
Tho' having seen all beauties of our time,  
Nor can see elsewhere, anything so fair.  
And if I fall her name will yet remain  
Untarnish'd as before ; but if I live,  
So aid me Heaven when at mine uttermost,  
As I will make her truly my true wife.'

Then, howsoever patient, Yniol's heart  
Danced in his bosom, seeing better days.

And looking round he saw not Enid there,  
(Who hearing her own name had slipt away)  
But that old dame, to whom full tenderly  
And fondling all her hand in his he said,  
'Mother, a maiden is a tender thing,  
And best by her that bore her understood.  
Go thou to rest, but ere thou go to rest  
Tell her, and prove her heart toward the Prince.'

So spake the kindly-hearted Earl, and she  
With frequent smile and nod departing found,  
Half disarray'd as to her rest, the girl ;  
Whom first she kiss'd on either cheek, and then  
On either shining shoulder laid a hand,  
And kept her off and gazed upon her face,  
And told her all their converse in the hall,  
Proving her heart : but never light and shade  
Coursed one another more on open ground  
Beneath a troubled heaven, than red and pale  
Across the face of Enid hearing her ;  
While slowly falling as a scale that falls,  
When weight is added only grain by grain,  
Sank her sweet head upon her gentle breast ;  
Nor did she lift an eye nor speak a word,  
Rapt in the fear and in the wonder of it ;  
So moving without answer to her rest  
She found no rest, and ever fail'd to draw  
The quiet night into her blood, but lay  
Contemplating her own unworthiness ;  
And when the pale and bloodless east began  
To quicken to the sun, arose, and raised  
Her mother too, and hand in hand they moved  
Down to the meadow where the jousts were held,  
And waited there for Yniol and Geraint.

And thither came the twain, and when Geraint  
Beheld her first in field, awaiting him,  
He felt, were she the prize of bodily force,  
Himself beyond the rest pushing could move  
The chair of Idris. Yniol's rusted arms  
Were on his princely person, but thro' these  
Princelike his bearing shone ; and errant knights  
And ladies came, and by and by the town  
Flow'd in, and settling circled all the lists.  
And there they fixt the forks into the ground,  
And over these they placed a silver wand  
And over that a golden sparrow-hawk.  
Then Yniol's nephew, after trumpet blown,  
Spake to the lady with him and proclaim'd,  
'Advance and take as fairest of the fair,  
For I these two years past have won it for thee,  
The prize of beauty.' Loudly spake the Prince,  
'Forbear : there is a worthier,' and the knight  
With some surprise and thrice as much disdain  
Turn'd, and beheld the four, and all his face  
Glow'd like the heart of a great fire at Yule,  
So burnt he was with passion, crying out,  
'Do battle for it then,' no more ; and thrice  
They clash'd together, and thrice they brake their spears.  
Then each, dishorsed and drawing, lash'd at each  
So often and with such blows, that all the crowd  
Wonder'd, and now and then from distant walls  
There came a clapping as of phantom hands.  
So twice they fought, and twice they breathed, and still  
The dew of their great labor, and the blood  
Of their strong bodies, flowing, drain'd their force.  
But either's force was match'd till Yniol's cry,  
'Remember that great insult done the Queen,'  
Increased Geraint's, who heaved his blade aloft,

And crack'd the helmet thro', and bit the bone,  
And fell'd him, and set foot upon his breast,  
And said, 'Thy name?' To whom the fallen man  
Made answer, groaning, 'Edyrn, son of Nudd!  
Ashamed am I that I should tell it thee.  
My pride is broken : men have seen my fall.'  
'Then, Edyrn, son of Nudd,' replied Geraint,  
'These two things shalt thou do, or else thou diest.  
First, thou thyself, thy lady, and thy dwarf,  
Shalt ride to Arthur's court, and being there,  
Crave pardon for that insult done the Queen,  
And shalt abide her judgment on it ; next,  
Thou shalt give back their earldom to thy kin.  
These two things shalt thou do, or thou shalt die.'  
And Edyrn answer'd, 'These things will I do,  
For I have never yet been overthrown,  
And thou hast overthrown me, and my pride  
Is broken down, for Enid sees my fall !'  
And rising up, he rode to Arthur's court,  
And there the Queen forgave him easily.  
And being young, he changed himself, and grew  
To hate the sin that seem'd so like his own  
Of Modred, Arthur's nephew, and fell at last  
In the great battle fighting for the king.

But when the third day from the hunting-morn  
Made a low splendor in the world, and wings  
Moved in her ivy, Enid, for she lay  
With her fair head in the dim-yellow light,  
Among the dancing shadows of the birds,  
Woke and bethought her of her promise given  
No later than last eve to Prince Geraint —  
So bent he seem'd on going the third day,  
He would not leave her, till her promise given —



To ride with him this morning to the court,  
And there be made known to the stately Queen,  
And there be wedded with all ceremony.  
At this she cast her eyes upon her dress,  
And thought it never yet had look'd so mean.  
For as a leaf in mid-November is  
To what it was in mid-October, seem'd  
The dress that now she look'd on to the dress  
She look'd on ere the coming of Geraint.  
And still she look'd, and still the terror grew  
Of that strange bright and dreadful thing, a court,  
All staring at her in her faded silk :  
And softly to her own sweet heart she said :

‘ This noble prince who won our earldom back,  
So splendid in his acts and his attire,  
Sweet heaven, how much I shall discredit him !  
Would he could tarry with us here awhile !  
But being so beholden to the Prince,  
It were but little grace in any of us,  
Bent as he seem'd on going this third day,  
To seek a second favor at his hands.  
Yet if he could but tarry a day or two,  
Myself would work eye dim, and finger lame,  
Far liefer than so much discredit him.’

And Enid fell in longing for a dress  
All branch'd and flower'd with gold, a costly gift  
Of her good mother, given her on the night  
Before her birthday, three sad years ago,  
That night of fire, when Edyrn sack'd their house,  
And scatter'd all they had to all the winds :  
For while the mother show'd it, and the two  
Were turning and admiring it, the work



To both appear'd so costly, rose a cry  
That Edyrn's men were on them, and they fled  
With little save the jewels they had on,  
Which being sold and sold had bought them bread :  
And Edyrn's men had caught them in their flight,  
And placed them in this ruin ; and she wish'd  
The Prince had found her in her ancient home ;  
Then let her fancy flit across the past,  
And roam the goodly places that she knew ;  
And last bethought her how she used to watch,  
Near that old home, a pool of golden carp ;  
And one was patch'd and blurr'd and lustreless  
Among his burnish'd brethren of the pool ;  
And half asleep she made comparison  
Of that and these to her own faded self  
And the gay court, and fell asleep again ;  
And dreamt herself was such a faded form  
Among her burnish'd sisters of the pool ;  
But this was in the garden of a king ;  
And tho' she lay dark in the pool, she knew  
That all was bright ; that all about were birds  
Of sunny plume in gilded trellis-work ;  
That all the turf was rich in plots that look'd  
Each like a garnet or a turkis in it ;  
And lords and ladies of the high court went  
In silver tissue talking things of state ;  
And children of the king in cloth of gold  
Glanced at the doors or gambol'd down the walks ;  
And while she thought ' they will not see me,' came  
A stately queen whose name was Guinevere,  
And all the children in their cloth of gold  
Ran to her, crying, ' if we have fish at all  
Let them be gold ; and charge the gardeners now  
To pick the faded creature from the pool,

And caſt it on the mixen that it die.'  
And therewithal one came and ſeized on her,  
And Enid ſtarted waking, with her heart  
All overſhadow'd by the fooliſh dream,  
And lo ! it was her mother grasping her  
To get her well awake ; and in her hand  
A ſuit of bright apparel, which ſhe laid  
Flat on the couch, and ſpoke exultingly :

' See here, my child, how fresh the colors look,  
How faſt they hold, like colors of a ſhell  
That keeps the wear and poliſh of the wave.  
Why not ? it never yet was worn, I trow :  
Look on it, child, and tell me if you know it.'

And Enid look'd, but all confused at firſt,  
Could ſcarce divide it from her fooliſh dream :  
Then ſuddenly ſhe knew it and rejoiced,  
And answer'd, ' Yea, I know it ; your good gift,  
So ſadly loſt on that unhappy night ;  
Your own good gift ! ' ' Yea, ſurely,' ſaid the dame,  
' And gladly given again this happy morn.  
For when the jousts were ended yeſterday,  
Went Yniol thro' the town, and everywhere  
He found the ſack and plunder of our houſe  
All ſcatter'd thro' the houſes of the town ;  
And gave command that all which once was ours,  
Should now be ours again : and yeſter-eve,  
While you were talking ſweetly with your Prince,  
Came one with this and laid it in my hand,  
For love or fear, or ſeeking favor of us,  
Because we have our earldom back again.  
And yeſter-eve I would not tell you of it,  
But kept it for a ſweet ſurpriſe at morn.

Yea, truly is it not a sweet surprise ?  
For I myself unwillingly have worn  
My faded suit, as you, my child, have yours,  
And howsoever patient, Yniol his.  
Ah, dear, he took me from a goodly house,  
With store of rich apparel, sumptuous fare,  
And page, and maid, and squire, and seneschal,  
And pastime both of hawk and hound, and all  
That appertains to noble maintenance.  
Yea, and he brought me to a goodly house ;  
But since our fortune slipt from sun to shade,  
And all thro' that young traitor, cruel need  
Constrain'd us, but a better time has come ;  
So clothe yourself in this, that better fits  
Our mended fortunes and a Prince's bride :  
For tho' you won the prize of fairest fair,  
And tho' I heard him call you fairest fair,  
Let never maiden think, however fair,  
She is not fairer in new clothes than old.  
And should some great court-lady say, the Prince  
Hath pick'd a ragged-robin from the hedge,  
And like a madman brought her to the court,  
Then were you shamed, and, worse, might shame the  
Prince  
To whom we are beholden ; but I know,  
When my dear child is set forth at her best,  
That neither court nor country, tho' they sought  
Thro' all the provinces like those of old  
That lighted on Queen Esther, has her match.'

Here ceased the kindly mother out of breath ;  
And Enid listen'd brightening as she lay ;  
Then, as the white and glittering star of morn  
Parts from a bank of snow, and by and by

Slips into golden cloud, the maiden rose,  
And left her maiden couch, and robed herself,  
Help'd by the mother's careful hand and eye,  
Without a mirror, in the gorgeous gown ;  
Who, after, turn'd her daughter round, and said,  
She never yet had seen her half so fair ;  
And call'd her like that maiden in the tale,  
Whom Gwydion made by glamour out of flowers,  
And sweeter than the bride of Cassivelaun,  
Flur, for whose love the Roman Cæsar first  
Invaded Britain, but we beat him back,  
As this great prince invaded us, and we,  
Not beat him back, but welcomed him with joy.  
And I can scarcely ride with you to court,  
For old am I, and rough the ways and wild ;  
But Yniol goes, and I full oft shall dream  
I see my princess as I see her now,  
Clothed with my gift, and gay among the gay.'

But while the women thus rejoiced, Geraint  
Woke where he slept in the high hall, and call'd  
For Enid, and when Yniol made report  
Of that good mother making Enid gay  
In such apparel as might well beseem  
His princess, or indeed the stately queen,  
He answer'd ; ' Earl, entreat her by my love,  
Albeit I give no reason but my wish,  
That she ride with me in her faded silk.'  
Yniol with that hard message went ; it fell,  
Like flaws in summer laying lusty corn :  
For Enid, all abash'd, she knew not why,  
Dared not to glance at her good mother's face,  
But silently, in all obedience,  
Her mother silent too, nor helping her,

Laid from her limbs the costly-broider'd gift,  
And robed them in her ancient suit again,  
And so descended. Never man rejoiced  
More than Geraint to greet her thus attired ;  
And glancing all at once as keenly at her,  
As careful robins eye the delver's toil,  
Made her cheek burn and either eyelid fall,  
But rested with her sweet face satisfied ;  
Then seeing cloud upon the mother's brow,  
Her by both hands he caught, and sweetly said.

' O my new mother, be not wroth or grieved  
At your new son, for my petition to her.  
When late I left Caeleon, our great Queen,  
In words whose echo lasts, they were so sweet,  
Made promise, that whatever bride I brought,  
Herself would clothe her like the sun in Heaven.  
Thereafter, when I reach'd this ruin'd hold,  
Beholding one so bright in dark estate,  
I vow'd that could I gain her, our kind Queen,  
No hand but hers, should make your Enid burst  
Sunlike from cloud — and likewise thought perhaps,  
That service done so graciously would bind  
The two together ; for I wish the two  
To love each other : how should Enid find  
A nobler friend ? Another thought I had ;  
I came among you here so suddenly,  
That tho' her gentle presence at the lists  
Might well have served for proof that I was loved,  
I doubted whether filial tenderness,  
Or easy nature, did not let itself  
Be moulded by your wishes for her weal ;  
Or whether some false sense in her own self  
Of my contrasting brightness, overbore

Her fancy dwelling in this dusky hall ;  
And such a sense might make her long for court  
And all its dangerous glories : and I thought,  
That could I someway prove such force in her  
Link'd with such love for me, that at a word  
(No reason given her) she could cast aside  
A splendor dear to women, new to her,  
And therefore dearer ; or if not so new,  
Yet therefore tenfold dearer by the power  
Of intermitted custom ; then I felt  
That I could rest, a rock in ebbs and flows,  
Fixt on her faith. Now, therefore, I do rest,  
A prophet certain of my prophecy,  
That never shadow of mistrust can cross  
Between us. Grant me pardon for my thoughts :  
And for my strange petition I will make  
Amends hereafter by some gaudy-day,  
When your fair child shall wear your costly gift  
Beside your own warm hearth, with, on her knees,  
Who knows ? another gift of the high God,  
Which, maybe, shall have learn'd to lisp you thanks.'

He spoke : the mother smiled, but half in tears,  
Then brought a mantle down and wrapt her in it,  
And claspt and kiss'd her, and they rode away.

Now thrice that morning Guinevere had climb'd  
The giant tower, from whose high crest, they say,  
Men saw the goodly hills of Somerset,  
And white sails flying on the yellow sea ;  
But not to goodly hill or yellow sea  
Look'd the fair Queen, but up the vale of Usk,  
By the flat meadow, till she saw them come ;  
And then descending met them at the gates,

Embraced her with all welcome as a friend,  
And did her honor as the Prince's bride,  
And clothed her for her bridals like the sun ;  
And all that week was old Caerleon gay,  
For by the hands of Dubric, the high saint,  
They twain were wedded with all ceremony.

And this was on the last year's Whitsuntide.  
But Enid ever kept the faded silk,  
Remembering how first he came on her,  
Drest in that dress, and how he loved her in it,  
And all her foolish fears about the dress,  
And all his journey toward her, as himself  
Had told her, and their coming to the court.

And now this morning when he said to her,  
'Put on your worst and meanest dress,' she found  
And took it, and array'd herself therein.

O purblind race of miserable men,  
How many among us at this very hour  
Do forge a life-long trouble for ourselves,  
By taking true for false, or false for true ;  
Here, thro' the feeble twilight of this world  
Groping, how many, until we pass and reach  
That other, where we see as we are seen !

So fared it with Geraint, who issuing forth  
That morning, when they both had got to horse,  
Perhaps because he loved her passionately,  
And felt that tempest brooding round his heart,  
Which, if he spoke at all, would break perforce  
Upon a head so dear in thunder, said :  
'Not at my side ! I charge you ride before,



Ever a good way on before ; and this  
I charge you, on your duty as a wife,  
Whatever happens, not to speak to me,  
No, not a word ! ' and Enid was aghast ;  
And forth they rode, but scarce three paces on,  
When crying out ' Effeminate as I am,  
I will not fight my way with gilded arms,  
All shall be iron ; ' he loosed a mighty purse,  
Hung at his belt, and hurl'd it toward the squire.  
So the last sight that Enid had of home  
Was all the marble threshold flashing, strown  
With gold and scatter'd coinage, and the squire  
Chafing his shoulder : then he cried again,  
' To the wilds ! ' and Enid leading down the tracks  
Thro' which he bade her lead him on, they past  
The marches, and by bandit-haunted holds,  
Gray swamps and pools, waste places of the hern,  
And wildernesses, perilous paths, they rode :  
Round was their pace at first, but slacken'd soon :  
A stranger meeting them had surely thought,  
They rode so slowly and they look'd so pale,  
That each had suffer'd some exceeding wrong.  
For he was ever saying to himself  
' O I that wasted time to tend upon her,  
To compass her with sweet observances,  
To dress her beautifully and keep her true ' —  
And there he broke the sentence in his heart  
Abruptly, as a man upon his tongue  
May break it, when his passion masters him.  
And she was ever praying the sweet heavens  
To save her dear lord whole from any wound.  
And ever in her mind she cast about  
For that unnoticed failing in herself,  
Which made him look so cloudy and so cold ;



Till the great plover's human whistle amazed  
Her heart, and glancing round the waste she fear'd  
In every wavering brake an ambuscade.  
Then thought again 'if there be such in me,  
I might amend it by the grace of heaven,  
If he would only speak and tell me of it.'

But when the fourth part of the day was gone,  
Then Enid was aware of three tall knights  
On horseback, wholly arm'd, behind a rock  
In shadow, waiting for them, caitiffs all ;  
And heard one crying to his fellow, 'Look,  
Here comes a laggard hanging down his head,  
Who seems no bolder than a beaten hound ;  
Come, we will slay him and will have his horse  
And armour, and his damsel shall be ours.'

Then Enid ponder'd in her heart, and said :  
'I will go back a little to my lord,  
And I will tell him all their caitiff talk ;  
For, be he wroth even to slaying me,  
Far liever by his dear hand had I die,  
Than that my lord should suffer loss or shame.'

Then she went back some paces of return,  
Met his full frown timidly firm, and said :  
'My lord, I saw three bandits by the rock  
Waiting to fall on you, and heard them boast  
That they would slay you, and possess your horse  
And armor, and your damsel should be theirs.'

He made a wrathful answer. 'Did I wish  
Your warning or your silence ? one command  
I laid upon you, not to speak to me,

And thus you keep it ! Well then, look — for now,  
Whether you wish me victory or defeat,  
Long for my life, or hunger for my death,  
Yourself shall see my vigor is not lost.'

Then Enid waited pale and sorrowful,  
And down upon him bare the bandit three.  
And at the midmost charging, Prince Geraint  
Drave the long spear a cubit thro' his breast  
And out beyond ; and then against his brace  
Of comrades, each of whom had broken on him  
A lance that splinter'd like an icicle,  
Swung from his brand a windy buffet out  
Once, twice, to right, to left, and stunn'd the twain  
Or slew them, and dismounting like a man  
That skins the wild beast after slaying him,  
Stript from the three dead wolves of woman born  
The three gay suits of armor which they wore,  
And let the bodies lie, but bound the suits  
Of armor on their horses, each on each,  
And tied the bridle-reins of all the three  
Together, and said to her, ' Drive them on  
Before you ;' and she drove them thro' the waste.

He follow'd nearer : ruth began to work  
Against his anger in him, while he watch'd  
The being he loved best in all the world,  
With difficulty in mild obedience  
Driving them on : he fain had spoken to her,  
And loosed in words of sudden fire the wrath  
And smoulder'd wrong that burnt him all within ;  
But evermore it seem'd an easier thing  
At once without remorse to strike her dead,  
Than to cry ' Halt,' and to her own bright face

Accuse her of the least immodesty :  
And thus tongue-tied, it made him wroth the more  
That she *could* speak whom his own ear had heard  
Call herself false : and suffering thus he made  
Minutes an age : but in scarce longer time  
Than at Caerleon the full-tided Usk,  
Before he turn to fall seaward again,  
Pauses, did Enid, keeping watch, behold  
In the first shallow shade of a deep wood,  
Before a gloom of stubborn-shafted oaks,  
Three other horsemen waiting, wholly arm'd,  
Whereof one seem'd far larger than her lord,  
And shook her pulses, crying, ' Look, a prize !  
Three horses and three goodly suits of arms,  
And all in charge of whom ? a girl : set on.'  
' Nay,' said the second, ' yonder comes a knight.'  
The third, ' A craven ; how he hangs his head.'  
The giant answer'd merrily, ' Yea, but one ?  
Wait here, and when he passes fall upon him.'

And Enid ponder'd in her heart and said,  
' I will abide the coming of my lord,  
And I will tell him all their villainy.  
My lord is weary with the fight before,  
And they will fall upon him unawares.  
I needs must disobey him for his good ;  
How should I dare obey him to his harm ?  
Needs must I speak, and tho' he kill me for it,  
I save a life dearer to me than mine.'

And she abode his coming, and said to him  
With timid firmness, ' Have I leave to speak ?'  
He said, ' You take it, speaking,' and she spoke.

‘There lurk three villains yonder in the wood,  
And each of them is wholly arm’d, and one  
Is larger-limb’d than you are, and they say  
That they will fall upon you while you pass.’

To which he flung a wrathful answer back :  
‘And if there were an hundred in the wood,  
And every man were larger-limb’d than I,  
And all at once should sally out upon me,  
I swear it would not ruffle me so much  
As you that not obey me. Stand aside,  
And if I fall, cleave to the better man.’

And Enid stood aside to wait the event,  
Not dare to watch the combat, only breathe  
Short fits of prayer, at every stroke a breath.  
And he, she dreaded most, bare down upon him.  
Aim’d at the helm, his lance err’d ; but Geraint’s,  
A little in the late encounter strain’d,  
Struck thro’ the bulky bandit’s corselet home,  
And then brake short, and down his enemy roll’d,  
And there lay still ; as he that tells the tale,  
Saw once a great piece of a promontory,  
That had a sapling growing on it, slip  
From the long shore-cliff’s windy walls to the beach,  
And there lie still, and yet the sapling grew :  
So lay the man transfixt. His craven pair  
Of comrades, making slower at the Prince,  
When now they saw their bulwark fallen, stood ;  
On whom the victor, to confound them more,  
Spurr’d with his terrible war-cry ; for as one,  
That listens near a torrent mountain-brook,  
All thro’ the crash of the near cataract hears  
The drumming thunder of the huger fall

At distance, were the soldiers wont to hear  
His voice in battle, and be kindled by it,  
And foemen scared, like that false pair who turn'd  
Flying, but, overtaken, died the death  
Themselves had wrought on many an innocent.

Thereon Geraint, dismounting, pick'd the lance  
That pleased him best, and drew from those dead wolves  
Their three gay suits of armor, each from each,  
And bound them on their horses, each on each,  
And tied the bridle-reins of all the three  
Together, and said to her, 'Drive them on  
Before you,' and she drove them thro' the wood.

He follow'd nearer still: the pain she had  
To keep them in the wild ways of the wood,  
Two sets of three laden with jingling arms,  
Together, served a little to disedge  
The sharpness of that pain about her heart:  
And they themselves, like creatures gently born  
But into bad hands fall'n, and now so long  
By bandits groom'd, prick'd their light ears, and felt  
Her low firm voice and tender government.

So thro' the green gloom of the wood they past,  
And issuing under open heavens beheld  
A little town with towers, upon a rock,  
And close beneath, a meadow gemlike chased  
In the brown wild, and mowers mowing in it:  
And down a rocky pathway from the place  
There came a fair-hair'd youth, that in his hand  
Bare victual for the mowers: and Geraint  
Had ruth again on Enid looking pale:  
Then, moving downward to the meadow ground,

He, when the fair-hair'd youth came by him, said,  
'Friend, let her eat ; the damsel is so faint.'  
'Yea, willingly,' replied the youth ; 'and you,  
My lord, eat also, tho' the fare is coarse,  
And only meet for mowers ;' then set down  
His basket, and dismounting on the sward  
They let the horses graze, and ate themselves.  
And Enid took a little delicately,  
Less having stomach for it than desire  
To close with her lord's pleasure ; but Geraint  
Ate all the mowers' victual unawares,  
And when he found all empty, was amazed ;  
And 'Boy,' said he, 'I have eaten all, but take  
A horse and arms for guerdon ; choose the best.'  
He, reddening in extremity of delight,  
'My lord, you overpay me fifty fold.'  
'You will be all the wealthier,' cried the Prince.  
'I take it as free gift, then,' said the boy,  
'Not guerdon ; for myself can easily,  
While your good damsel rests, return, and fetch  
Fresh victual for these mowers of our Earl ;  
For these are his, and all the field is his,  
And I myself am his ; and I will tell him  
How great a man you are : he loves to know  
When men of mark are in his territory :  
And he will have you to his palace here,  
And serve you costlier than with mowers' fare.'

Then said Geraint, 'I wish no better fare :  
I never ate with angrier appetite  
Than when I left your mowers dinnerless.  
And into no Earl's palace will I go.  
I know, God knows, too much of palaces !  
And if he want me, let him come to me.

But hire us some fair chamber for the night,  
And stalling for the horses, and return  
With victual for these men, and let us know.'

'Yea, my kind lord,' said the glad youth, and went,  
Held his head high, and thought himself a knight,  
And up the rocky pathway disappear'd,  
Leading the horse, and they were left alone.

But when the Prince had brought his errant eyes  
Home from the rock, sideways he let them glance  
At Enid, where she droopt : his own false doom,  
That shadow of mistrust should never cross  
Betwixt them, came upon him, and he sigh'd ;  
Then with another humorous ruth remark'd  
The lusty mowers laboring dinnerless,  
And watch'd the sun blaze on the turning scythe,  
And after nodded sleepily in the heat.  
But she, remembering her old ruin'd hall,  
And all the windy clamor of the daws  
About her hollow turret, pluck'd the grass  
There growing longest by the meadow's edge,  
And into many a listless annulet,  
Now over, now beneath her marriage ring,  
Wove and unwove it, till the boy return'd  
And told them of a chamber, and they went ;  
Where, after saying to her, ' If you will,  
Call for the woman of the house,' to which  
She answer'd, ' Thanks, my lord ;' the two remain'd  
Apart by all the chamber's width, and mute  
As creatures voiceless thro' the fault of birth,  
Or two wild men supporters of a shield,  
Painted, who stare at open space, nor glance  
The one at other, parted by the shield.



On a sudden, many a voice along the street,  
And heel against the pavement echoing, burst  
Their drowse ; and either started while the door,  
Push'd from without, drove backward to the wall,  
And midmost of a rout of roisterers,  
Femininely fair and dissolutely pale,  
Her suitor in old years before Geraint,  
Enter'd, the wild lord of the place, Limours.  
He moving up with pliant courtliness,  
Greeted Geraint full face, but stealthily,  
In the mid-warmth of welcome and graspt hand,  
Found Enid with the corner of his eye,  
And knew her sitting sad and solitary.  
Then cried Geraint for wine and goodly cheer  
To feed the sudden guest, and sumptuously  
According to his fashion, bad the host  
Call in what men soever were his friends,  
And feast with these in honor of their earl ;  
' And care not for the cost ; the cost is mine.'

And wine and food were brought, and Earl Limours  
Drank till he jested with all ease, and told  
Free tales, and took the word and play'd upon it,  
And made it of two colors ; for his talk,  
When wine and free companions kindled him,  
Was wont to glance and sparkle like a gem  
Of fifty facets ; thus he moved the Prince  
To laughter and his comrades to applause.  
Then, when the Prince was merry, ask'd Limours,  
' Your leave, my lord, to cross the room, and speak  
To your good damsel there who sits apart,  
And seems so lonely ?' ' My free leave,' he said ;  
' Get her to speak : she does not speak to me.'  
Then rose Limours and looking at his feet,



Like him who tries the bridge he fears may fail,  
Crost and came near, lifted adoring eyes,  
Bow'd at her side and utter'd whisperingly :

‘ Enid, the pilot star of my lone life,  
Enid my early and my only love,  
Enid the loss of whom has turn'd me wild —  
What chance is this ? how is it I see you here ?  
You are in my power at last, are in my power.  
Yet fear me not : I call mine own self wild,  
But keep a touch of sweet civility  
Here in the heart of waste and wilderness.  
I thought, but that your father came between,  
In former days you saw me favorably.  
And if it were so do not keep it back :  
Make me a little happier : let me know it :  
Owe you me nothing for a life half-lost ?  
Yea, yea, the whole dear debt of all you are.  
And, Enid, you and he, I see it with joy —  
You sit apart, you do not speak to him,  
You come with no attendance, page or maid,  
To serve you — does he love you as of old ?  
For, call it lovers' quarrels, yet I know  
Tho' men may bicker with the things they love,  
They would not make them laughable in all eyes,  
Not while they loved them ; and your wretched dress,  
A wretched insult on you, dumbly speaks  
Your story, that this man loves you no more.  
Your beauty is no beauty to him now :  
A common chance — right well I know it — pall'd —  
For I know men : nor will you win him back,  
For the man's love once gone never returns.  
But here is one who loves you as of old ;  
With more exceeding passion than of old :

Good, speak the word : my followers ring him round :  
He sits unarm'd ; I hold a finger up ;  
They understand : no ; I do not mean blood :  
Nor need you look so scared at what I say :  
My malice is no deeper than a moat,  
No stronger than a wall : there is the keep ;  
He shall not cross us more ; speak but the word :  
Or speak it not ; but then by Him that made me  
The one true lover which you ever had,  
I will make use of all the power I have.  
O pardon me ! the madness of that hour,  
When first I parted from you, moves me yet.'

At this the tender sound of his own voice  
And sweet self-pity, or the fancy of it,  
Made his eye moist ; but Enid fear'd his eyes,  
Moist as they were, wine-heated from the feast ;  
And answer'd with such craft as women use,  
Guilty or guiltless, to stave off a chance  
That breaks upon them perilously, and said :

'Earl, if you love me as in former years,  
And do not practise on me, come with morn,  
And snatch me from him as by violence ;  
Leave me to-night : I am weary to the death.'

Low at leave-taking, with his brandish'd plume  
Brushing his instep, bow'd the all-amorous Earl,  
And the stout Prince bad him a loud good-night.  
He moving homeward babbled to his men,  
How Enid never loved a man but him,  
Nor cared a broken egg-shell for her lord.

But Enid left alone with Prince Geraint,

Debating his command of silence given,  
And that she now perforce must violate it,  
Held commune with herself, and while she held  
He fell asleep, and Enid had no heart  
To wake him, but hung o'er him, wholly pleased  
To find him yet unwounded after fight,  
And near him breathing low and equally.  
Anon she rose, and stepping lightly, heap'd  
The pieces of his armor in one place,  
All to be there against a sudden need ;  
Then dozed awhile herself, but overtoil'd  
By that day's grief and travel, evermore  
Seem'd catching at a rootless thorn, and then  
Went slipping down horrible precipices,  
And strongly striking out her limbs awoke ;  
Then thought she heard the wild Earl at the door,  
With all his rout of random followers,  
Sound on a dreadful trumpet, summoning her ;  
Which was the red cock shouting to the light,  
As the gray dawn stole o'er the dewy world,  
And glimmer'd on his armour in the room.  
And once again she rose to look at it,  
But touch'd it unawares : jangling, the casque  
Fell, and he started up and stared at her.  
Then breaking his command of silence given,  
She told him all that Earl Limours had said,  
Except the passage that he loved her not ;  
Nor left untold the craft herself had used ;  
But ended with apology so sweet,  
Low-spoken, and of so few words, and seem'd  
So justified by that necessity,  
That tho' he thought 'was it for him she wept  
In Devon ?' he but gave a wrathful groan,  
Saying 'your sweet faces make good fellows fools

And traitors. Call the host and bid him bring  
Charger and palfrey.' So she glided out  
Among the heavy breathings of the house,  
And like a household Spirit at the walls  
Beat, till she woke the sleepers, and return'd :  
Then tending her rough lord, tho' all unask'd,  
In silence, did him service as a squire ;  
Till issuing arm'd he found the host and cried,  
'Thy reckoning, friend ?' and ere he learnt it, 'Take  
Five horses and their armors ;' and the host,  
Suddenly honest, answer'd in amaze,  
'My lord, I scarce have spent the worth of one !'  
'You will be all the wealthier,' said the Prince,  
And then to Enid, 'Forward ! and to-day  
I charge you, Enid, more especially,  
What thing soever you may hear, or see,  
Or fancy (tho' I count it of small use  
To charge you) that you speak not but obey.'

And Enid answer'd, 'Yea, my lord, I know  
Your wish, and would obey ; but riding first,  
I hear the violent threats you do not hear,  
I see the danger which you cannot see :  
Then not to give you warning, that seems hard ;  
Almost beyond me : yet I would obey.'

'Yea so,' said he, 'do it : be not too wise ;  
Seeing that you are wedded to a man,  
Not quite mismated with a yawning clown,  
But one with arms to guard his head and yours,  
With eyes to find you out however far,  
And ears to hear you even in his dreams.'

With that he turn'd and look'd as keenly at her

As careful robins eye the delver's toil ;  
And that within her, which a wanton fool,  
Or hasty judger would have call'd her guilt,  
Made her cheek burn and either eyelid fall.  
And Geraint look'd and was not satisfied.

Then forward by a way which, beaten broad,  
Led from the territory of false Limours  
To the waste earldom of another earl,  
Doorm, whom his shaking vassals call'd the Bull,  
Went Enid with her sullen follower on.  
Once she look'd back, and when she saw him ride  
More near by many a rood than yester-morn,  
It wellnigh made her cheerful ; till Geraint  
Waving an angry hand as who should say  
' You watch me,' sadden'd all her heart again.  
But while the sun yet beat a dewy blade,  
The sound of many a heavily-galloping hoof  
Smote on her ear, and turning round she saw  
Dust, and the points of lances bicker in it.  
Then not to disobey her lord's behest,  
And yet to give him warning, for he rode  
As if he heard not, moving back she held  
Her finger up, and pointed to the dust.  
At which the warrior in his obstinacy,  
Because she kept the letter of his word  
Was in a manner pleased, and turning, stood.  
And in the moment after, wild Limours,  
Borne on a black horse, like a thunder-cloud  
Whose skirts are loosen'd by the breaking storm,  
Half ridden off with by the thing he rode,  
And all in passion uttering a dry shriek,  
Dash'd on Geraint, who closed with him, and bore  
Down by the length of lance and arm beyond

'The crupper, and so left him stunn'd or dead,  
And overthrew the next that follow'd him,  
And blindly rush'd on all the rout behind.  
But at the flash and motion of the man  
They vanish'd panic-stricken, like a shoal  
Of darting fish, that on a summer morn  
Adown the crystal dykes at Camelot  
Come slipping o'er their shadows on the sand,  
But if a man who stands upon the brink  
But lift a shining hand against the sun,  
There is not left the twinkle of a fin  
Betwixt the cressy islets white in flower ;  
So, scared but at the motion of the man,  
Fled all the boon companions of the Earl,  
And left him lying in the public way ;  
So vanish friendships only made in wine.

Then like a stormy sunlight smiled Geraint,  
Who saw the chargers of the two that fell  
Start from their fallen lords, and wildly fly,  
Mixt with the flyers. 'Horse and man,' he said,  
'All of one mind and all right-honest friends !  
Not a hoof left : and I methinks till now  
Was honest — paid with horses and with arms ;  
I cannot steal or plunder, no nor beg :  
And so what say you, shall we strip him there  
Your lover ? has your palfrey heart enough  
To bear his armor ? shall we fast, or dine ?  
No ? — then do you, being right honest, pray  
That we may meet the horsemen of Earl Doorm,  
I too would still be honest.' Thus he said :  
And sadly gazing on her bridle-reins,  
And answering not one word, she led the way.

But as a man to whom a dreadful loss  
Falls in a far land and he knows it not,  
But coming back he learns it, and the loss  
So pains him that he sickens nigh to death ;  
So fared it with Geraint, who being prick'd  
In combat with the follower of Limours,  
Bled underneath his armor secretly,  
And so rode on, nor told his gentle wife  
What ail'd him, hardly knowing it himself,  
Till his eye darken'd and his helmet wagg'd ;  
And at a sudden swerving of the road,  
Tho' happily down on a bank of grass,  
The Prince, without a word, from his horse fell.

And Enid heard the clashing of his fall,  
Suddenly came, and at his side all pale  
Dismounting, loosed the fastenings of his arms,  
Nor let her true hand falter, nor blue eye  
Moisten, till she had lighted on his wound,  
And tearing off her veil of faded silk  
Had bared her forehead to the blistering sun,  
And swathed the hurt that drain'd her dear lord's life.  
Then after all was done that hand could do,  
She rested, and her desolation came  
Upon her, and she wept beside the way.

And many past, but none regarded her,  
For in that realm of lawless turbulence,  
A woman weeping for her murder'd mate  
Was cared as much for as a summer shower :  
One took him for a victim of Earl Doorm,  
Nor dared to waste a perilous pity on him :  
Another hurrying past, a man-at-arms,  
Rode on a mission to the bandit Earl ;



Half whistling and half singing a coarse song,  
He drove the dust against her veiless eyes :  
Another, flying from the wrath of Doorm  
Before an ever-fancied arrow, made  
The long way smoke beneath him in his fear ;  
At which her palfrey whinnying lifted heel,  
And scour'd into the coppices and was lost,  
While the great charger stood, grieved like a man.

But at the point of noon the huge Earl Doorm,  
Broad-faced with under-fringe of russet beard,  
Bound on a foray, rolling eyes of prey,  
Came riding with a hundred lances up ;  
But ere he came, like one that hails a ship,  
Cried out with a big voice, ' What, is he dead ?'  
' No, no, not dead !' she answer'd in all haste.  
' Would some of your kind people take him up,  
And bear him hence out of this cruel sun :  
Most sure am I, quite sure, he is not dead.'

Then said Earl Doorm ; ' Well, if he be not dead,  
Why wail you for him thus ? you seem a child.  
And be he dead, I count you for a fool ;  
Your wailing will not quicken him : dead or not,  
You mar a comely face with idiot tears.  
Yet, since the face *is* comely — some of you,  
Here, take him up, and bear him to our hall :  
An if he live, we will have him of our band ;  
And if he die, why earth has earth enough  
To hide him. See ye take the charger too,  
A noble one.'

He spake, and past away,  
But left two brawny spearmen, who advanced,  
Each growling like a dog, when his good bone



Seems to be pluck'd at by the village boys  
Who love to vex him eating, and he fears  
To lose his bone, and lays his foot upon it,  
Gnawing and growling : so the ruffians growl'd,  
Fearing to lose, and all for a dead man,  
Their chance of booty from the morning's raid ;  
Yet raised and laid him on a litter-bier,  
Such as they brought upon their forays out  
For those that might be wounded ; laid him on it  
All in the hollow of his shield, and took  
And bore him to the naked hall of Doorm,  
(His gentle charger following him unled)  
And cast him and the bier in which he lay  
Down on an oaken settle in the hall,  
And then departed, hot in haste to join  
Their luckier mates, but growling as before,  
And cursing their lost time, and the dead man,  
And their own Earl, and their own souls, and her.  
They might as well have blest her : she was deaf  
To blessing or to cursing save from one.

So for long hours sat Enid by her lord,  
There in the naked hall, propping his head,  
And chafing his pale hands, and calling to him.  
And at the last he waken'd from his swoon,  
And found his own dear bride propping his head,  
And chafing his faint hands, and calling to him ;  
And felt the warm tears falling on his face ;  
And said to his own heart, ' she weeps for me : '  
And yet lay still, and feign'd himself as dead,  
That he might prove her to the uttermost,  
And say to his own heart ' she weeps for me.'

But in the falling afternoon return'd

The huge Earl Doorm with plunder to the hall.  
His lusty spearmen follow'd him with noise :  
Each hurling down a heap of things that rang  
Against the pavement, cast his lance aside,  
And doff'd his helm : and then there flutter'd in,  
Half-bold, half-frighted, with dilated eyes,  
A tribe of women, dress'd in many hues,  
And mingled with the spearmen : and Earl Doorm  
Struck with a knife's haft hard against the board,  
And call'd for flesh and wine to feed his spears.  
And men brought in whole hogs and quarter beeves,  
And all the hall was dim with steam of flesh :  
And none spake word, but all sat down at once,  
And ate with tumult in the naked hall,  
Feeding like horses when you hear them feed ;  
Till Enid shrank far back into herself,  
To shun the wild ways of the lawless tribe.  
But when Earl Doorm had eaten all he would,  
He roll'd his eyes about the hall, and found  
A damsel drooping in a corner of it.  
Then he remember'd her, and how she wept ;  
And out of her there came a power upon him ;  
And rising on the sudden he said, ' Eat !  
I never yet beheld a thing so pale.  
God's curse, it makes me mad to see you weep.  
Eat ! Look yourself. Good luck had your good man,  
For were I dead who is it would weep for me ?  
Sweet lady, never since I first drew breath,  
Have I beheld a lily like yourself.  
And so there lived some color in your cheek,  
There is not one among my gentlewomen  
Were fit to wear your slipper for a glove.  
But listen to me, and by me be ruled,  
And I will do the thing I have not done,

For you shall share my earldom with me, girl,  
And we will live like two birds in one nest,  
And I will fetch you forage from all fields,  
For I compel all creatures to my will.'

He spoke : the brawny spearman let his cheek  
Bulge with the unswallow'd piece, and turning stared ;  
While some, whose souls the old serpent long had drawn  
Down, as the worm draws in the wither'd leaf  
And makes it earth, hiss'd each at other's ear  
What shall not be recorded — women they,  
Women, or what had been those gracious things,  
But now desired the humbling of their best,  
Yea, would have helped him to it : and all at once  
They hated her, who took no thought of them,  
But answer'd in low voice, her meek head yet  
Drooping, ' I pray you of your courtesy,  
He being as he is, to let me be.'

She spake so low he hardly heard her speak,  
But like a mighty patron, satisfied  
With what himself had done so graciously,  
Assumed that she had thanked him, adding, ' yea,  
Eat and be glad, for I account you mine.'

She answer'd meekly, ' How should I be glad  
Henceforth in all the world at anything,  
Until my lord arise and look upon me ?'

Here the huge Earl cried out upon her talk,  
As all but empty heart and weariness  
And sickly nothing ; suddenly seized on her,  
And bare her by main violence to the board,  
And thrust the dish before her, crying, ' Eat.'

‘No, no,’ said Enid, vext, ‘I will not eat,  
Till yonder man upon the bier arise,  
And eat with me.’ ‘Drink, then,’ he answer’d. ‘Here!’  
(And fill’d a horn with wine and held it to her,)  
‘Lo! I, myself, when flush’d with fight, or hot,  
God’s curse, with anger — often I myself,  
Before I well have drunken, scarce can eat:  
Drink therefore, and the wine will change your will.’

‘Not so,’ she cried, ‘by Heaven, I will not drink,  
Till my dear lord arise and bid me do it,  
And drink with me; and if he rise no more,  
I will not look at wine until I die.’

At this he turn’d all red and paced his hall,  
Now gnaw’d his under, now his upper lip,  
And coming up close to her, said at last;  
‘Girl, for I see you scorn my courtesies,  
Take warning: yonder man is surely dead;  
And I compel all creatures to my will.  
Not eat nor drink? And wherefore wait for one,  
Who put your beauty to this flout and scorn  
By dressing it in rags? Amazed am I,  
Beholding how you butt against my wish,  
That I forbear you thus: cross me no more.  
At least put off to please me this poor gown,  
This silken rag, this beggar-woman’s weed:  
I love that beauty should go beautifully:  
For see you not my gentlewomen here,  
How gay, how suited to the house of one,  
Who loves that beauty should go beautifully!  
Rise therefore; robe yourself in this: obey.’

He spoke, and one among his gentlewomen

Display'd a splendid silk of foreign loom,  
Where like a shoaling sea the lovely blue  
Play'd into green, and thicker down the front  
With jewels than the sward with drops of dew,  
When all night long a cloud clings to the hill,  
And with the dawn ascending lets the day  
Strike where it clung : so thickly shone the gems.

But Enid answer'd, harder to be moved  
Than hardest tyrants in their day of power,  
With life-long injuries burning unavenged,  
And now their hour has come ; and Enid said :

‘ In this poor gown my dear lord found me first,  
And loved me serving in my father's hall :  
In this poor gown I rode with him to court,  
And there the Queen array'd me like the sun :  
In this poor gown he bade me clothe myself,  
When now we rode upon this fatal quest  
Of honor, where no honor can be gain'd :  
And this poor gown I will not cast aside  
Until himself arise a living man,  
And bid me cast it. I have griefs enough :  
Pray you be gentle, pray you let me be :  
I never loved, can never love but him :  
Yea, God, I pray you of your gentleness,  
He being as he is, to let me be.’

Then strode the brute Earl up and down his hall,  
And took his russet beard between his teeth ;  
Last, coming up quite close, and in his mood  
Crying, ‘ I count it of no more avail,  
Dame, to be gentle than ungentle with you ;  
Take my salute,’ unknighly with flat hand,  
However lightly, smote her on the cheek.

Then Enid, in her utter helplessness,  
And since she thought, 'he had not dared to do it,  
Except he surely knew my lord was dead,'  
Sent forth a sudden sharp and bitter cry,  
As of a wild thing taken in the trap,  
Which sees the trapper coming thro' the wood.

This heard Geraint, and grasping at his sword,  
(It lay beside him in the hollow shield),  
Made but a single bound, and with a sweep of it  
Shore thro' the swarthy neck, and like a ball  
The russet-bearded head roll'd on the floor.  
So died Earl Doorm by him he counted dead.  
And all the men and women in the hall  
Rose when they saw the dead man rise, and fled  
Yelling as from a spectre, and the two  
Were left alone together, and he said :

'Enid, I have used you worse than that dead man ;  
Done you more wrong : we both have undergone  
That trouble which has left me thrice your own :  
Henceforward I will rather die than doubt.  
And here I lay this penance on myself, . . .  
Not, tho' mine own ears heard you yester-morn —  
You thought me sleeping, but I heard you say,  
I heard you say, that you were no true wife :  
I swear I will not ask your meaning in it :  
I do believe yourself against yourself,  
And will henceforward rather die than doubt.'

And Enid could not say one tender word,  
She felt so blunt and stupid at the heart :  
She only prayed him, 'Fly, they will return  
And slay you ; fly, your charger is without,

My palfrey lost.' 'Then, Enid, shall you ride  
Behind me.' 'Yea,' said Enid, 'let us go.'  
And moving out they found the stately horse,  
Who now no more a vassal to the thief,  
But free to stretch his limbs in lawful fight,  
Neigh'd with all gladness as they came, and stoop'd  
With a low whinny toward the pair : and she  
Kiss'd the white star upon his noble front,  
Glad also ; then Geraint upon the horse  
Mounted, and reach'd a hand, and on his foot  
She set her own and climb'd ; he turn'd his face  
And kiss'd her climbing, and she cast her arms  
About him, and at once they rode away.

And never yet, since high in Paradise  
O'er the four rivers the first roses blew,  
Came purer pleasure unto mortal kind  
Than lived thro' her, who in that perilous hour  
Put hand to hand beneath her husband's heart,  
And felt him hers again : she did not weep,  
But o'er her meek eyes came a happy mist  
Like that which kept the heart of Eden green  
Before the useful trouble of the rain :  
Yet not so misty were her meek blue eyes  
As not to see before them on the path,  
Right in the gateway of the bandit hold,  
A knight of Arthur's court, who laid his lance  
In rest, and made as if to fall upon him.  
Then, fearing for his hurt and loss of blood,  
She, with her mind all full of what had chanced,  
Shriek'd to the stranger, 'Slay not a dead man !'  
'The voice of Enid,' said the knight ; but she,  
Beholding it was Edyrn son of Nudd,  
Was moved so much the more, and shriek'd again,



'O cousin, slay not him who gave you life.'  
And Edyrn moving frankly forward spake :  
'My lord Geraint, I greet you with all love ;  
I took you for a bandit knight of Doorm ;  
And fear not, Enid, I should fall upon him,  
Who love you, Prince, with something of the love  
Wherewith we love the Heaven that chastens us.  
For once, when I was up so high in pride  
That I was halfway down the slope to Hell,  
By overthrowing me you threw me higher.  
Now, made a knight of Arthur's Table Round,  
And since I knew this Earl, when I myself  
Was half a bandit in my lawless hour,  
I come the mouthpiece of our King to Doorm  
(The King is close behind me) bidding him  
Disband himself, and scatter all his powers,  
Submit, and hear the judgment of the King.'

'He hears the judgment of the King of Kings,'  
Cried the wan Prince ; 'and lo the powers of Doorm  
Are scatter'd,' and he pointed to the field,  
Where, huddled here and there on mound and knoll,  
Were men and women staring and aghast,  
While some yet fled ; and then he plainlier told  
How the huge Earl lay slain within his hall.  
But when the knight besought him, 'Follow me,  
Prince, to the camp, and in the King's own ear  
Speak what has chanced ; you surely have endured  
Strange chances here alone ;' that other flush'd,  
And hung his head, and halted in reply,  
Fearing the mild face of the blameless King,  
And after madness acted question ask'd :  
Till Edyrn crying, 'If you will not go  
To Arthur, then will Arthur come to you,'



‘Enough,’ he said, ‘I follow,’ and they went.  
But Enid in their going had two fears,  
One from the bandit scatter’d in the field,  
And one from Edyrn. Every now and then,  
When Edyrn rein’d his charger at her side,  
She shrank a little. In a hollow land,  
From which old fires have broken, men may fear  
Fresh fire and ruin. He, perceiving, said :

‘Fair and dear cousin, you that most had cause  
To fear me, fear no longer, I am changed.  
Yourself were first the blameless cause to make  
My nature’s prideful sparkle in the blood  
Break into furious flame ; being repulsed  
By Yniol and yourself, I schemed and wrought  
Until I overturn’d him ; then set up  
(With one main purpose ever at my heart)  
My haughty jousts, and took a paramour ;  
Did her mock-honor as the fairest fair,  
And, toppling over all antagonism,  
So wax’d in pride, that I believed myself  
Unconquerable, for I was wellnigh mad :  
And, but for my main purpose in these jousts,  
I should have slain your father, seized yourself.  
I lived in hope that sometime you would come  
To these my lists with him whom best you loved ;  
And there, poor cousin, with your meek blue eyes,  
The truest eyes that ever answer’d heaven,  
Behold me overturn and trample on him.  
Then, had you cried, or knelt, or pray’d to me,  
I should not less have kill’d him. And you came, —  
But once you came, — and with your own true eyes  
Beheld the man you loved (I speak as one  
Speaks of a service done him) overthrow

My proud self, and my purpose three years old,  
And set his foot upon me, and give me life.  
There was I broken down ; there was I saved :  
Tho' thence I rode all-shamed, hating the life  
He gave me, meaning to be rid of it.  
And all the penance the Queen laid upon me  
Was but to rest awhile within her court ;  
Where first as sullen as a beast new-caged,  
And waiting to be treated like a wolf,  
Because I knew my deeds were known, I found,  
Instead of scornful pity or pure scorn,  
Such fine reserve and noble reticence,  
Manners so kind, yet stately, such a grace  
Of tenderest courtesy, that I began  
To glance behind me at my former life,  
And find that it had been the wolf's indeed :  
And oft I talk'd with Dubric, the high saint,  
Who, with mild heat of holy oratory,  
Subdued me somewhat to that gentleness,  
Which, when it weds with manhood, makes a man.  
And you were often there about the Queen,  
But saw me not, or mark'd not if you saw ;  
Nor did I care or dare to speak with you,  
But kept myself aloof till I was changed ;  
And fear not, cousin ; I am changed indeed.'

He spoke, and Enid easily believed,  
Like simple noble natures, credulous  
Of what they long for, good in friend or foe,  
There most in those who most have done them ill.  
And when they reach'd the camp the King himself  
Advanced to greet them, and beholding her  
Tho' pale, yet happy, ask'd her not a word,  
But went apart with Edyrn, whom he held

In converse for a little, and return'd,  
And, gravely smiling, lifted her from horse,  
And kiss'd her with all pureness, brother-like,  
And show'd an empty tent allotted her,  
And glancing for a minute, till he saw her  
Pass into it, turn'd to the Prince, and said :

- ' Prince, when of late you pray'd me for my leave  
To move to your own land, and there defend  
Your marches, I was prick'd with some reproof,  
As one that let foul wrong stagnate and be,  
By having look'd too much thro' alien eyes,  
And wrought too long with delegated hands,  
Not used mine own : but now behold me come  
To cleanse this common sewer of all my realm,  
With Edyrn and with others : have you look'd  
At Edyrn ? have you seen how nobly changed ?  
This work of his is great and wonderful.  
His very face with change of heart is changed.  
The world will not believe a man repents :  
And this wise world of ours is mainly right.  
Full seldom *does* a man repent, or use  
Both grace and will to pick the vicious quitch  
Of blood and custom wholly out of him,  
And make all clean, and plant himself afresh.  
Edyrn has done it, weeding all his heart  
As I will weed this land before I go.  
I, therefore, made him of our Table Round,  
Not rashly, but have proved him everyway  
One of our noblest, our most valorous,  
Sanest and most obedient : and indeed  
This work of Edyrn wrought upon himself  
After a life of violence, seems to me  
A thousand-fold more great and wonderful

Than if some knight of mine, risking his life,  
My subject with my subjects under him,  
Should make an onslaught single on a realm  
Of robbers, tho' he slew them one by one,  
And were himself nigh wounded to the death.'

So spake the King ; low bow'd the Prince, and felt  
His work was neither great nor wonderful,  
And past to Enid's tent ; and thither came  
The King's own leech to look into his hurt ;  
And Enid tended on him there ; and there  
Her constant motion round him, and the breath  
Of her sweet tendance hovering over him,  
Fill'd all the genial courses of his blood  
With deeper and with ever deeper love,  
As the south-west that blowing Bala lake  
Fills all the sacred Dee. So past the days.

But while Geraint lay healing of his hurt,  
The blameless King went forth and cast his eyes  
On whom his father Uther left in charge  
Long since, to guard the justice of the King :  
He look'd and found them wanting ; and as now  
Men weed the white horse on the Berkshire hills  
To keep him bright and clean as heretofore,  
He rooted out the slothful officer  
Or guilty, which for bribe had wink'd at wrong,  
And in their chairs set up a stronger race  
With hearts and hands, and sent a thousand men  
To till the wastes, and moving everywhere  
Clear'd the dark places and let in the law,  
And broke the bandit holds and cleansed the land.

Then, when Geraint was whole again, they past

With Arthur to Caerleon upon Usk.  
There the great Queen once more embraced her friend,  
And clothed her in apparel like the day.  
And tho' Geraint could never take again  
That comfort from their converse which he took  
Before the Queen's fair name was breathed upon,  
He rested well content that all was well.  
Thence after tarrying for a space they rode,  
And fifty knights rode with them to the shores  
Of Severn, and they past to their own land.  
And there he kept the justice of the King  
So vigorously yet mildly, that all hearts  
Applauded, and the spiteful whisper died :  
And being ever foremost in the chase,  
And victor at the tilt and tournament,  
They call'd him the great Prince and man of men.  
But Enid, whom her ladies loved to call  
Enid the Fair, a grateful people named  
Enid the Good ; and in their halls arose  
The cry of children, Enids and Geraints  
Of times to be ; nor did he doubt her more  
But rested in her fæalty, till he crown'd  
A happy life with a fair death, and fell  
Against the heathen of the Northern Sea  
In battle, fighting for the blameless King.





## V I V I E N .

A STORM was coming, but the winds were still,  
And in the wild woods of Broceliande,  
Before an oak, so hollow huge and old  
It look'd a tower of ruin'd masonwork,  
At Merlin's feet the wily Vivien lay.

The wily Vivien stole from Arthur's court :  
She hated all the knights, and heard in thought  
Their lavish comment when her name was named.  
For once, when Arthur walking all alone,  
Vext at a rumor rife about the Queen,  
Had met her, Vivien, being greeted fair,  
Would fain have wrought upon his cloudy mood  
With reverent eyes mock-loyal, shaken voice,  
And flutter'd adoration, and at last  
With dark sweet hints of some who prized him more  
Than who should prize him most ; at which the King  
Had gazed upon her blankly and gone by :  
But one had watch'd, and had not held his peace :  
It made the laughter of an afternoon  
That Vivien should attempt the blameless King.

And after that, she set herself to gain  
Him, the most famous man of all those times,  
Merlin, who knew the range of all their arts,  
Had built the King his havens, ships, and halls,  
Was also Bard, and knew the starry heavens ;  
The people called him Wizard ; whom at first-  
She play'd about with slight and sprightly talk,  
And vivid smiles, and faintly-venom'd points  
Of slander, glancing here and grazing there ;  
And yielding to his kindlier moods, the Seer  
Would watch her at her petulance, and play,  
Ev'n when they seem'd unloveable, and laugh  
As those that watch a kitten ; thus he grew  
Tolerant of what he half disdain'd, and she,  
Perceiving that she was but half disdain'd,  
Began to break her sports with graver fits,  
Turn red or pale, would often when they met  
Sigh fully, or all-silent gaze upon him  
With such a fixt devotion, that the old man,  
Tho' doubtful, felt the flattery, and at times  
Would flatter his own wish in age for love,  
And half believe her true : for thus at times  
He waver'd ; but that other clung to him,  
Fixt in her will, and so the seasons went.  
Then fell upon him a great melancholy ;  
And leaving Arthur's court he gain'd the beach ;  
There found a little boat, and stept into it ;  
And Vivien follow'd, but he mark'd her not.  
She took the helm and he the sail ; the boat  
Drave with a sudden wind across the deeps,  
And touching Breton sands, they disembark'd.  
And then she follow'd Merlin all the way,  
Ev'n to the wild woods of Broceliande.  
For Merlin once had told her of a charm,

The which if any wrought on any one  
With woven paces and with waving arms,  
The man so wrought on ever seem'd to lie  
Closed in the four walls of a hollow tower,  
From which was no escape for evermore ;  
And none could find that man for evermore,  
Nor could he see but him who wrought the charm  
Coming and going, and he lay as dead  
And lost to life and use and name and fame.  
And Vivien ever sought to work the charm  
Upon the great Enchanter of the Time,  
As fancying that her glory would be great  
According to his greatness whom she quench'd.

There lay she all her length and kiss'd his feet,  
As if in deepest reverence and in love.  
A twist of gold was round her hair ; a robe  
Of samite without price, that more express  
Than hid her, clung about her lissome limbs,  
In color like the satin-shining palm  
On sallows in the windy gleams of March :  
And while she kiss'd them, crying, ' Trample me,  
Dear feet, that I have follow'd thro' the world,  
And I will pay you worship ; tread me down  
And I will kiss you for it ; ' he was mute :  
So dark a forethought roll'd about his brain,  
As on a dull day in an Ocean cave  
The blind wave feeling round his long sea-hall  
In silence : wherefore, when she lifted up  
A face of sad appeal, and spake and said,  
' O Merlin, do you love me ? ' and again,  
' O Merlin, do you love me ? ' and once more,  
' Great Master, do you love me ? ' he was mute.  
And lissome Vivien, holding by his heel,



Writhed toward him, slided up his knee and sat,  
 Behind his ankle twined her hollow feet  
 Together, curved an arm about his neck,  
 Clung like a snake ; and letting her left hand  
 Droop from his mighty shoulder, as a leaf,  
 Made with her right a comb of pearl to part  
 The lists of such a beard as youth gone out  
 Had left in ashes : then he spoke and said,  
 Not looking at her, ' who are wise in love  
 Love most, say least,' and Vivien answer'd quick,  
 ' I saw the little elf-god eyeless once  
 In Arthur's arras hall at Camelot :  
 But neither eyes nor tongue, — O stupid child !  
 Yet you are wise who say it ; let me think  
 Silence is wisdom : I am silent then  
 And ask no kiss ;' then adding all at once,  
 ' And lo, I clothe myself with wisdom,' drew  
 The vast and shaggy mantle of his beard  
 Across her neck and bosom to her knee,  
 And call'd herself a gilded summer fly  
 Caught in a great old tyrant spider's web,  
 Who meant to eat her up in that wild wood  
 Without one word. So Vivien call'd herself,  
 But rather seem'd a lovely baleful star  
 Veil'd in gray vapor ; till he sadly smiled :  
 ' To what request for what strange boon,' he said,  
 ' Are these your pretty tricks and fooleries,  
 O Vivien, the preamble ? yet my thanks,  
 For these have broken up my melancholy.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling saucily,  
 ' What, O my Master, have you found your voice ?  
 I bid the stranger welcome. Thanks at last !  
 But yesterday you never open'd lip,

Except indeed to drink : no cup had we :  
In mine own lady palms I cull'd the spring  
That gather'd trickling dropwise from the cleft,  
And made a pretty cup of both my hands  
And offer'd you it kneeling : then you drank  
And knew no more, nor gave me one poor word ;  
O no more thanks than might a goat have given  
With no more sign of reverence than a beard.  
And when we halted at that other well,  
And I was faint to swooning, and you lay  
Foot-gilt with all the blossom-dust of those  
Deep meadows we had traversed, did you know  
That Vivien bathed your feet before her own ?  
And yet no thanks : and all thro' this wild wood  
And all this morning when I fondled you :  
Boon, yes, there was a boon, one not so strange —  
How had I wrong'd you ? surely you are wise,  
But such a silence is more wise than kind.'

And Merlin lock'd his hand in hers and said ;  
'O did you never lie upon the shore,  
And watch the curl'd white of the coming wave  
Glass'd in the slippery sand before it breaks ?  
Ev'n such a wave, but not so pleasurable,  
Dark in the glass of some presageful mood,  
Had I for three days seen, ready to fall. .  
And then I rose and fled from Arthur's court  
To break the mood. You follow'd me unask'd ;  
And when I look'd, and saw you following still,  
My mind involved yourself the nearest thing  
In that mind-mist : for shall I tell you truth ?  
*You* seem'd that wave about to break upon me  
And sweep me from my hold upon the world,  
My use and name and fame. Your pardon, child.

Your pretty sports have brighten'd all again.  
And ask your boon, for boon I owe you thrice,  
Once for wrong done you by confusion, next  
For thanks it seems till now neglected, last  
For these your dainty gambols : wherefore ask ;  
And take this boon so strange and not so strange.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling mournfully ;  
' O not so strange as my long asking it,  
Nor yet so strange as you yourself are strange,  
Nor half so strange as that dark mood of yours.  
I ever fear'd you were not wholly mine ;  
And see, yourself have own'd you did me wrong.  
The people call you prophet : let it be :  
But not of those that can expound themselves.  
Take Vivien for expounder ; she will call  
That three-days-long presageful gloom of yours  
No presage, but the same mistrustful mood  
That makes you seem less noble than yourself,  
Whenever I have ask'd this very boon,  
Now ask'd again : for see you not, dear love,  
That such a mood as that, which lately gloom'd  
Your fancy when you saw me following you,  
Must make me fear still more you are not mine,  
Must make me yearn still more to prove you mine,  
And make me wish still more to learn this charm  
Of woven paces and of waving hands,  
As proof of trust. O Merlin, teach it me.  
The charm so taught will charm us both to rest.  
For, grant me some slight power upon your fate,  
I, feeling that you felt me worthy trust,  
Should rest and let you rest, knowing you mine.  
And therefore be as great as you are named,  
Not muffled round with selfish reticence.

How hard you look and how denyingly !  
O, if you think this wickedness in me,  
That I should prove it on you unawares,  
To make you lose your use and name and fame,  
That makes me most indignant ; then our bond  
Had best be loosed forever : but think or not,  
By Heaven that hears I tell you the clean truth,  
As clean as blood of babes, as white as milk :  
O Merlin, may this earth, if ever I,  
If these unwitty wandering wits of mine,  
Ev'n in the jumbled rubbish of a dream,  
Have tript on such conjectural treachery —  
May this hard earth cleave to the Nadir hell  
Down, down, and close again, and nip me flat,  
If I be such a traitress. Yield my boon,  
Till which I scarce can yield you all I am ;  
And grant my re-reiterated wish,  
The great proof of your love : because I think,  
However wise, you hardly know me yet.'

And Merlin loosed his hand from hers and said,  
' I never was less wise, however wise,  
Too curious Vivien, tho' you talk of trust,  
Than when I told you first of such a charm.  
Yea, if you talk of trust I tell you this,  
Too much I trusted, when I told you that,  
And stirr'd this vice in you which ruin'd man  
Thro' woman the first hour ; for howsoe'er  
In children a great curiousness be well,  
Who have to learn themselves and all the world,  
In you, that are no child, for still I find  
Your face is practised, when I spell the lines,  
I call it, — well, I will not call it vice :  
But since you name yourself the summer fly,

I well could wish a cobweb for the gnat,  
That settles, beaten back, and beaten back  
Settles, till one could yield for weariness :  
But since I will not yield to give you power  
Upon my life and use and name and fame,  
Why will you never ask some other boon ?  
Yea, by God's rood, I trusted you too much.'

And Vivien, like the tenderest-hearted maid  
That ever bided tryst at village stile,  
Made answer, either eyelid wet with tears.  
'Nay, master, be not wrathful with your maid ;  
Caress her : let her feel herself forgiven  
Who feels no heart to ask another boon.  
I think you hardly know the tender rhyme  
Of "trust me not at all or all in all."  
I heard the great Sir Lancelot sing it once,  
And it shall answer for me. Listen to it.

"In Love, if Love be Love, if Love be ours,  
Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal powers :  
Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all.

"It is the little rift within the lute,  
That by and by will make the music mute,  
And ever widening slowly silence all.

"The little rift within the lover's lute,  
Or little pitted speck in garner'd fruit,  
That rotting inward slowly moulders all.

"It is not worth the keeping : let it go :  
But shall it ? answer, darling, answer, no.  
And trust me not at all or all in all."

O, master, do you love my tender rhyme ?'

And Merlin look'd and half believed her true,  
So tender was her voice, so fair her face,  
So sweetly gleam'd her eyes behind her tears  
Like sunlight on the plain behind a shower :  
And yet he answer'd half indignantly.

' Far other was the song that once I heard  
By this huge oak, sung nearly where we sit :  
For here we met, some ten or twelve of us,  
To chase a creature that was current then  
In these wild woods, the hart with golden horns.  
It was the time when first the question rose  
About the founding of a Table Round,  
That was to be, for love of God and men  
And noble deeds, the flower of all the world.  
And each incited each to noble deeds.  
And while we waited, one, the youngest of us,  
We could not keep him silent, out he flash'd,  
And into such a song, such fire for fame,  
Such trumpet-blowings in it, coming down  
To such a stern and iron-clashing close,  
That when he stopt we long'd to hurl together,  
And should have done it ; but the beauteous beast  
Scared by the noise upstart'd at our feet,  
And like a silver shadow slipt away  
Thro' the dim land ; and all day long we rode  
Thro' the dim land against a rushing wind,  
That glorious roundel echoing in our ears,  
And chased the flashes of his golden horns  
Until they vanish'd by the fairy well  
That laughs at iron — as our warriors did —  
Where children cast their pins and nails, and cry,

“Laugh little well,” but touch it with a sword.  
It buzzes wildly round the point ; and there  
We lost him : such a noble song was that.  
But, Vivien, when you sang me that sweet rhyme,  
I felt as tho’ you knew this cursed charm,  
Were proving it on me, and that I lay  
And felt them slowly ebbing, name and fame.’

And Vivien answer’d smiling mournfully ;  
‘O mine have ebb’d away for evermore,  
And all thro’ following you to this wild wood,  
Because I saw you sad, to comfort you.  
Lo now, what hearts have men ! they never mount  
As high as woman in her selfless mood.  
And touching fame, howe’er you scorn my song  
Take one verse more — the lady speaks it — this :

“My name, once mine, now thine, is closelier mine,  
For fame, could fame be mine, that fame were thine,  
And shame, could shame be thine, that shame were mine.  
So trust me not at all or all in all.”

‘Says she not well ? and there is more — this rhyme  
Is like the fair pearl-necklace of the Queen,  
That burst in dancing, and the pearls were spilt ;  
Some lost, some stolen, some as relics kept.  
But nevermore the same two sister pearls  
Ran down the silken thread to kiss each other  
On her white neck — so is it with this rhyme :  
It lives dispersedly in many hands,  
And every minstrel sings it differently ;  
Yet is there one true line, the pearl of pearls ;  
“Man dreams of Fame while woman wakes to love.”  
True : Love, tho’ Love were of the grossest, carves



A portion from the solid present, eats  
And uses, careless of the rest ; but Fame,  
The Fame that follows death is nothing to us ;  
And what is Fame in life but half-disfame,  
And counterchanged with darkness ? you yourself  
Know well that Envy calls you Devil's son,  
And since you seem the Master of all Art,  
They fain would make you Master of all Vice.'

And Merlin lock'd his hand in hers and said,  
'I once was looking for a magic weed,  
And found a fair young squire who sat alone,  
Had carved himself a knightly shield of wood,  
And then was painting on it fancied arms,  
Azure, an Eagle rising or, the Sun  
In dexter chief ; the scroll " I follow fame."  
And speaking not, but leaning over him,  
I took his brush and blotted out the bird,  
And made a Gardener putting in a graff,  
With this for motto, " Rather use than fame."  
You should have seen him blush ; but afterwards  
He made a stalwart knight. O Vivien,  
For you, methinks you think you love me well ;  
For me, I love you somewhat ; rest : and Love  
Should have some rest and pleasure in himself,  
Not ever be too curious for a boon,  
Too prurient for a proof against the grain  
Of him you say you love : but Fame with men,  
Being but ampler means to serve mankind,  
Should have small rest or pleasure in herself,  
But work as vassal to the larger love,  
That dwarfs the petty love of one to one.  
Use gave me Fame at first, and Fame again  
Increasing gave me use. Lo, there my boon !



What other ? for men sought to prove me vile,  
Because I wish'd to give them greater minds :  
And then did Envy call me Devil's son :  
The sick weak beast seeking to help herself  
By striking at her better, miss'd, and brought  
Her own claw back, and wounded her own heart.  
Sweet were the days when I was all unknown,  
But when my name was lifted up, the storm  
Broke on the mountain and I cared not for it.  
Right well know I that Fame is half-disfame,  
Yet needs must work my work. That other fame,  
To one at least, who hath not children, vague,  
The cackle of the unborn about the grave,  
I cared not for it : a single misty star,  
Which is the second in a line of stars  
That seem a sword beneath a belt of three,  
I never gazed upon it but I dreamt  
Of some vast charm concluded in that star  
To make fame nothing. Wherefore, if I fear,  
Giving you power upon me thro' this charm,  
That you might play me falsely, having power,  
However well you think you love me now  
(As sons of kings loving in pupillage  
Have turn'd to tyrants when they came to power)  
I rather dread the loss of use than fame ;  
If you — and not so much from wickedness,  
As some wild turn of anger, or a mood  
Of overstrain'd affection, it may be,  
To keep me all to your own self, or else  
A sudden spurt of woman's jealousy,  
Should try this charm on whom you say you love.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling as in wrath.  
'Have I not sworn ? I am not trusted. Good !

Well, hide it, hide it ; I shall find it out ;  
And being found take heed of Vivien.  
A woman and not trusted, doubtless I  
Might feel some sudden turn of anger born  
Of your 'misfaith ; and your fine epithet  
Is accurate too, for this full love of mine  
Without the full heart back may merit well  
Your term of overstrain'd. So used as I,  
My daily wonder is, I love at all.  
And as to woman's jealousy, O why not ?  
O to what end, except a jealous one,  
And one to make me jealous if I love,  
Was this fair charm invented by yourself ?  
I well believe that all about this world  
You cage a buxom captive here and there,  
Closed in the four walls of a hollow tower  
From which is no escape for evermore.'

Then the great Master merrily answer'd her.  
' Full many a love in loving youth was mine,  
I needed then no charm to keep them mine  
But youth and love ; and that full heart of yours  
Whereof you prattle, may now assure you mine ;  
So live uncharm'd. For those who wrought it first,  
The wrist is parted from the hand that waved,  
The feet unmortised from their ankle-bones  
Who paced it, ages back : but will you hear  
The legend as in guerdon for your rhyme ?

“ There lived a king in the most Eastern East,  
Less old than I, yet older, for my blood  
Hath earnest in it of far springs to be.  
A tawny pirate anchor'd in his port,  
Whose bark had plunder'd twenty nameless isles ;

And passing one, at the high peep of dawn,  
He saw two cities in a thousand boats  
All fighting for a woman on the sea.  
And pushing his black craft among them all,  
He lightly scatter'd theirs and brought her off,  
With loss of half his people arrow-slain ;  
A maid so smooth, so white, so wonderful,  
They said a light came from her when she moved :  
And since the pirate would not yield her up,  
The King impaled him for his piracy ;  
Then made her Queen : but those isle-nurtur'd eyes  
Waged such unwilling tho' successful war  
On all the youth, they sicken'd ; councils thinn'd,  
And armies waned, for magnet-like she drew  
The rustiest iron of old fighters' hearts ;  
And beasts themselves would worship ; camels knelt  
Unbidden, and the brutes of mountain back  
That carry kings in castles, bow'd black knees  
Of homage, ringing with their serpent hands,  
To make her smile, her golden ankle-bells.  
What wonder, being jealous, that he sent  
His horns of proclamation out thro' all  
The hundred under-kingdoms that he sway'd  
To find a wizard who might teach the King  
Some charm, which being wrought upon the Queen  
Might keep her all his own : to such a one  
He promised more than ever king has given,  
A league of mountain full of golden mines,  
A province with a hundred miles of coast,  
A palace and a princess, all for him :  
But on all those who tried and fail'd, the King  
Pronounced a dismal sentence, meaning by it  
To keep the list low and pretenders back,  
Or like a king, not to be trifled with —

Their heads should moulder on the city gates.  
And many tried and fail'd, because the charm  
Of nature in her overbore their own :  
And many a wizard brow bleach'd on the walls :  
And many weeks a troop of carrion crows  
Hung like a cloud above the gateway towers.'

And Vivien breaking in upon him, said :  
'I sit and gather honey ; yet, methinks,  
Your tongue has tript a little : ask yourself.  
The lady never made *unwilling* war  
With those fine eyes ; she had her pleasure in it,  
And made her good man jealous with good cause.  
And lived there neither dame nor damsel then  
Wroth at a lover's loss ? were all as tame,  
I mean, as noble, as their Queen was fair ?  
Not one to flirt a venom at her eyes,  
Or pinch a murderous dust into her drink,  
Or make her paler with a poison'd rose ?  
Well, those were not our days ; but did they find  
A wizard ? Tell me, was he like to thee ?'

She ceased, and made her lithe arm round his neck  
Tighten, and then drew back, and let her eyes  
Speak for her, glowing on him, like a bride's  
On her new lord, her own, the first of men.

He answer'd laughing, 'Nay, not like to me.  
At last they found — his foragers for charms —  
A little glassy-headed hairless man,  
Who lived alone in a great wild on grass ;  
Read but one book, and ever reading grew  
So grated down and filed away with thought,  
So lean his eyes were monstrous ; while the skin  
Clung but to crate and basket, ribs and spine.

And since he kept his mind on one sole aim,  
Nor ever touch'd fierce wine, nor tasted flesh,  
Nor own'd a sensual wish, to him the wall  
That sunders ghosts and shadow-casting men  
Became a crystal, and he saw them thro' it,  
And heard their voices talk behind the wall,  
And learnt their elemental secrets, powers  
And forces ; often o'er the sun's bright eye  
Drew the vast eyelid of an inky cloud,  
And lash'd it at the base with slanting storm ;  
Or in the noon of mist and driving rain,  
When the lake whiten'd and the pinewood roar'd,  
And the cairn'd mountain was a shadow, sunn'd  
The world to peace again : here was the man.  
And so by force they dragg'd him to the King.  
And then he taught the King to charm the Queen  
In such-wise, that no man could see her more,  
Nor saw she save the King, who wrought the charm,  
Coming and going, and she lay as dead,  
And lost all use of life : but when the King  
Made proffer of the league of golden mines,  
The province with a hundred miles of coast,  
The palace and the princess, that old man  
Went back to his old wild, and lived on grass,  
And vanish'd, and his book came down to me.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling saucily ;  
' You have the book : the charm is written in it :  
Good : take my counsel : let me know it at once :  
For keep it like a puzzle chest in chest,  
With each chest lock'd and padlock'd thirty-fold,  
And whelm all this beneath as vast a mound  
As after furious battle turfs the slain  
On some wild down above the windy deep,

I yet should strike upon a sudden means  
To dig, pick, open, find and read the charm :  
Then, if I tried it, who should blame me then ?'

And smiling as a Master smiles at one  
That is not of his school, nor any school  
But that where blind and naked Ignorance  
Delivers brawling judgments, unashamed,  
On all things all day long ; he answer'd her.

' *You* read the book, my pretty Vivien !  
O ay, it is but twenty pages long,  
But every page having an ample marge,  
And every marge enclosing in the midst  
A square of text that looks a little blot,  
The text no larger than the limbs of fleas ;  
And every square of text an awful charm,  
Writ in a language that has long gone by.  
So long, that mountains have arisen since  
With cities on their flanks — *you* read the book !  
And every margin scribbled, crost, and cramm'd  
With comment, densest condensation, hard  
To mind and eye ; but the long sleepless nights  
Of my long life have made it easy to me.  
And none can read the text, not even I ;  
And none can read the comment but myself ;  
And in the comment did I find the charm.  
O, the results are simple ; a mere child  
Might use it to the harm of any one,  
And never could undo it : ask no more :  
For tho' you should not prove it upon me,  
But keep that oath you swore, you might, perchance,  
Assay it on some one of the Table Round,  
And all because you dream they babble of you.'

And Vivien, frowning in true anger, said :  
'What dare the full-fed liars say of me ?  
*They* ride abroad redressing human wrongs !  
They sit with knife in meat and wine in horn.  
*They* bound to holy vows of chastity !  
Were I not woman, I could tell a tale.  
But you are man, you well can understand  
The shame that cannot be explain'd for shame.  
Not one of all the drove should touch me : swine !'

Then answer'd Merlin careless of her words.  
'You breathe but accusation vast and vague,  
Spleen-born, I think, and proofless. If you know,  
Set up the charge you know, to stand or fall !'

And Vivien answer'd frowning wrathfully.  
'O, ay, what say ye to Sir Valence, him  
Whose kinsman left him watcher o'er his wife  
And two fair babes, and went to distant lands ;  
Was one year gone, and on returning found  
Not two but three : there lay the reckling, one  
But one hour old ! What said the happy sire ?  
A seven months' babe had been a truer gift.  
Those twelve sweet moons confused his fatherhood.'

Then answer'd Merlin 'Nay, I know the tale.  
Sir Valence wedded with an outland dame :  
Some cause had kept him sunder'd from his wife :  
One child they had : it lived with her : she died :  
His kinsman travelling on his own affair  
Was charged by Valence to bring home the child.  
He brought, not found it therefore : take the truth.'

'O ay,' said Vivien, 'overtrue a tale.  
What say ye then to sweet Sir Sagramore,



That ardent man ? “to pluck the flower in season ;”  
So says the song, “I trow it is no treason.”  
O Master, shall we call him overquick  
To crop his own sweet rose before the hour ?’

And Merlin answer’d ‘Overquick are you  
To catch a lothly plume fall’n from the wing  
Of that foul bird of rapine whose whole prey  
Is man’s good name : he never wrong’d his bride.  
I know the tale. An angry gust of wind  
Puff’d out his torch among the myriad-room’d  
And many-corridor’d complexities  
Of Arthur’s palace : then he found a door  
And darkling felt the sculptured ornament  
That wreathen round it made it seem his own ;  
And wearied out made for the couch and slept,  
A stainless man beside a stainless maid ;  
And either slept, nor knew of other there ;  
Till the high dawn piercing the royal rose  
In Arthur’s casement glimmer’d chastely down,  
Blushing upon them blushing, and at once  
He rose without a word and parted from her :  
But when the thing was blazed about the court,  
The brute world howling forced them into bonds,  
And as it chanced they are happy, being pure.’

‘O ay,’ said Vivien, ‘that were likely too.  
What say ye then to fair Sir Percivale  
And of the horrid foulness that he wrought,  
The saintly youth, the spotless lamb of Christ,  
Or some black wether of St. Satan’s fold.  
What, in the precincts of the chapel-yard,  
Among the knightly brasses of the graves,  
And by the cold Hic Jacets of the dead !’



And Merlin answer'd careless of her charge.  
'A sober man is Percivale and pure ;  
But once in life was fluster'd with new wine,  
Then paced for coolness in the chapel-yard ;  
Where one of Satan's shepherdesses caught  
And meant to stamp him with her master's mark ;  
And that he sinn'd, is not believable ;  
For, look upon his face ! — but if he sinn'd,  
The sin that practice burns into the blood,  
And not the one dark hour which brings remorse,  
Will brand us, after, of whose fold we be :  
Or else were he, the holy king, whose hymns  
Are chanted in the minster, worse than all.  
But is your spleen froth'd out, or have ye more ?'

And Vivien answer'd frowning yet in wrath ;  
'O ay ; what say ye to Sir Lancelot, friend ?  
Traitor or true ? that commerce with the Queen,  
I ask you, is it clamor'd by the child,  
Or whisper'd in the corner ? do you know it ?'

To which he answer'd sadly, 'Yea, I know it.  
Sir Lancelot went ambassador, at first,  
To fetch her, and she took him for the King ;  
So fixt her fancy on him : let him be.  
But have you no one word of loyal praise  
For Arthur, blameless King and stainless man ?

She answer'd with a low and chuckling laugh ;  
'Him ? is he man at all, who knows and winks ?  
Sees what his fair bride is and does, and winks ?  
By which the good king means to blind himself,  
And blinds himself and all the Table Round  
To all the foulness that they work. Myself

Could call him (were it not for womanhood)  
The pretty, popular name such manhood earns,  
Could call him the main cause of all their crime ;  
Yea, were he not crown'd king, coward, and fool.'

Then Merlin to his own heart, loathing, said ;  
'O true and tender ! O my liege and king !  
O selfless man and stainless gentleman,  
Who would'st against thine own eye-witness fain  
Have all men true and leal, all women pure ;  
How, in the mouths of base interpreters,  
From over-fineness not intelligible  
To things with every sense as false and foul  
As the poach'd filth that floods the middle street,  
Is thy white blamelessness accounted blame !'

But Vivien deeming Merlin overborne  
By instance, recommenced, and let her tongue  
Rage like a fire among the noblest names,  
Polluting, and imputing her whole self,  
Defaming and defacing, till she left  
Not even Lancelot brave, nor Galahad clean.

Her words had issue other than she will'd.  
He dragg'd his eyebrow bushes down, and made  
A snowy penthouse for his hollow eyes,  
And mutter'd in himself, 'tell *her* the charm !  
So, if she had it, would she rail on me  
To snare the next, and if she have it not,  
So will she rail. What did the wanton say ?  
"Not mount as high ;" we scarce can sink as low :  
For men at most differ as Heaven and earth,  
But women, worst and best, as Heaven and Hell.  
I know the Table Round, my friends of old ;

All brave, and many generous, and some chaste.  
I think she cloaks the wounds of loss with lies ;  
I do believe she tempted them and fail'd,  
She is so bitter : for fine plots may fail,  
Tho' harlots paint their talk as well as face  
With colors of the heart that are not theirs.  
I will not let her know : nine tithes of times  
Face-flatterers and backbiters are the same.  
And they, sweet soul, that most impute a crime  
Are pronest to it, and impute themselves,  
Wanting the mental rage ; or low desire  
Not to feel lowest makes them level all ;  
Yea, they would pare the mountain to the plain,  
To leave an equal baseness ; and in this  
Are harlots like the crowd, that if they find  
Some stain or blemish in a name of note,  
Not grieving that their greatest are so small,  
Inflate themselves with some insane delight,  
And judge all nature from her feet of clay,  
Without the will to lift their eyes, and see  
Her godlike head crown'd with spiritual fire,  
And touching other worlds. I am weary of her.'

He spoke in words part heard, in whispers part,  
Half-suffocated in the hoary fell  
And many-winter'd fleece of throat and chin.  
But Vivien, gathering somewhat of his mood,  
And hearing 'harlot' mutter'd twice or thrice,  
Leapt from her session on his lap, and stood  
Stiff as a viper frozen ; loathsome sight,  
How from the rosy lips of life and love,  
Flash'd the bare-grinning skeleton of death !  
White was her cheek ; sharp breaths of anger puff'd  
Her fairy nostril out ; her hand half-clench'd

Went faltering sideways downward to her belt,  
And feeling ; had she found a dagger there  
(For in a wink the false love turns to hate)  
She would have stabb'd him ; but she found it not :  
His eye was calm, and suddenly she took  
To bitter weeping like a beaten child,  
A long, long weeping, not consolable.  
Then her false voice made way broken with sobs.

‘O crueller than was ever told in tale,  
Or sung in song ! O vainly lavish'd love !  
O cruel, there was nothing wild or strange,  
Or seeming shameful, for what shame in love,  
So love be true, and not as yours is — nothing  
Poor Vivien had not done to win his trust  
Who call'd her what he call'd her — all her crime,  
All — all — the wish to prove him wholly hers.’

She mused a little, and then clapt her hands  
Together with a wailing shriek, and said :  
‘Stabb'd through the heart's affections to the heart !  
Seeth'd like the kid in its own mother's milk !  
Kill'd with a word worse than a life of blows !  
I thought that he was gentle, being great :  
O God, that I had loved a smaller man !  
I should have found in him a greater heart.  
O, I, that flattering my true passion, saw  
The knights, the court, the king, dark in your light,  
Who loved to make men darker than they are,  
Because of that high pleasure which I had  
To seat you sole upon my pedestal  
Of worship — I am answer'd, and henceforth  
The course of life that seem'd so flowery to me  
With you for guide and master, only you,

Becomes the sea-cliff pathway broken short,  
And ending in a ruin — nothing left,  
But into some low cave to crawl, and there,  
If the wolf spare me, weep my life away,  
Kill'd with inutterable unkindliness.'

She paused, she turn'd away, she hung her head,  
The snake of gold slid from her hair, the braid  
Slipt and uncoil'd itself, she wept afresh,  
And the dark wood grew darker toward the storm  
In silence, while his anger slowly died  
Within him, till he let his wisdom go  
For ease of heart, and half believed her true :  
Call'd her to shelter in the hollow oak,  
'Come from the storm,' and having no reply,  
Gazed at the heaving shoulder, and the face  
Hand-hidden, as for utmost grief or shame ;  
Then thrice essay'd, by tenderest-touching terms  
To sleek her ruffled peace of mind, in vain.  
At last she let herself be conquer'd by him,  
And as the cageling newly flown returns,  
The seeming-injured simple-hearted thing  
Came to her old perch back, and settled there.  
There while she sat, half-falling from his knees,  
Half-nestled at his heart, and since he saw  
The slow tear creep from her closed eyelid yet,  
About her, more in kindness than in love,  
The gentle wizard cast a shielding arm.  
But she dislink'd herself at once and rose,  
Her arms upon her breast across, and stood  
A virtuous gentlewoman deeply wrong'd,  
Upright and flush'd before him : then she said :

'There must be now no passages of love

Betwixt us twain henceforward evermore.  
    Since, if I be what I am grossly call'd,  
    What should be granted which your own gross heart  
    Would reckon worth the taking? I will go.  
    In truth, but one thing now — better have died  
    Thrice than have ask'd it once — could make me stay —  
    That proof of trust — so often ask'd in vain!  
    How justly, after that vile term of yours,  
    I find with grief! I might believe you then,  
    Who knows? once more. O, what was once to me  
    Mere matter of the fancy, now has grown  
    The vast necessity of heart and life.  
    Farewell; think kindly of me, for I fear  
    My fate or fault, omitting gayer youth  
    For one so old, must be to love you still.  
    But ere I leave you let me swear once more  
    That if I schemed against your peace in this,  
    May yon just heaven, that darkens o'er me, send  
    One flash, that, missing all things else, may make  
    My scheming brain a cinder, if I lie.'

    Scarce had she ceased, when out of heaven a bolt  
    (For now the storm was close above them) struck,  
    Furrowing a giant oak, and javelining  
    With darded spikes and splinters of the wood  
    The dark earth round. He raised his eyes and saw  
    The tree that shone white-listed thro' the gloom.  
    But Vivien, fearing heaven had heard her oath,  
    And dazzled by the livid-flickering fork,  
    And deafen'd with the stammering cracks and claps  
    That follow'd, flying back and crying out,  
    'O Merlin, tho' you do not love me, save,  
    Yet save me!' clung to him and hugg'd him close;  
    And call'd him dear protector in her fright,

Nor yet forgot her practice in her fright,  
But wrought upon his mood and hugg'd him close.  
The pale blood of the wizard at her touch  
Took gayer colors, like an opal warm'd.  
She blamed herself for telling hearsay tales :  
She shook from fear, and for her fault she wept  
Of petulancy ; she call'd him lord and liege,  
Her seer, her bard, her silver star of eve,  
Her God, her Merlin, the one passionate love  
Of her whole life ; and ever overhead  
Bellow'd the tempest, and the rotten branch  
Snapt in the rushing of the river-rain  
Above them ; and in change of glare and gloom  
Her eyes and neck glittering went and came ;  
Till now the storm, its burst of passion spent,  
Moaning and calling out of other lands,  
Had left the ravaged woodland yet once more  
To peace ; and what should not have been had been,  
For Merlin, overtalk'd and overworn,  
Had yielded, told her all the charm, and slept.

Then, in one moment, she put forth the charm  
Of woven paces and of waving hands;  
And in the hollow oak he lay as dead,  
And lost to life and use and name and fame.

Then crying ' I have made his glory mine,'  
And shrieking out ' O fool ! ' the harlot leapt  
Adown the forest, and the thicket closed  
Behind her, and the forest echo'd ' fool.'







## ELAINE.

ELAINE the fair, Elaine the loveable,  
Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,  
High in her chamber up a tower to the east  
Guarded the sacred shield of Lancelot ;  
Which first she placed where morning's earliest ray  
Might strike it, and awake her with the gleam ;  
Then fearing rust or soilure fashion'd for it  
A case of silk, and braided thereupon  
All the devices blazon'd on the shield  
In their own tinct, and added, of her wit,  
A border fantasy of branch and flower,  
And yellow-throated nestling in the nest.  
Nor rested thus content, but day by day  
Leaving her household and good father climb'd  
That eastern tower, and entering barr'd her door,  
Stript off the case, and read the naked shield,  
Now guess'd a hidden meaning in his arms,  
Now made a pretty history to herself  
Of every dint a sword had beaten in it,  
And every scratch a lance had made upon it,  
Conjecturing when and where : this cut is fresh ;  
That ten years back ; this dealt him at Caerlyle ;



That at Caerleon ; this at Camelot :  
And ah God's mercy what a stroke was there !  
And here a thrust that might have kill'd, but God  
Broke the strong lance, and roll'd his enemy down,  
And saved him : so she lived in fantasy.

How came the lily maid by that good shield  
Of Lancelot, she that knew not ev'n his name ?  
He left it with her, when he rode to tilt  
For the great diamond in the diamond jousts,  
Which Arthur had ordain'd, and by that name  
Had named them, since a diamond was the prize.

For Arthur when none knew from whence he came,  
Long ere the people chose him for their king,  
Roving the trackless realms of Lyonesse,  
Had found a glen, gray boulder and black tarn.  
A horror lived about the tarn, and clave  
Like its own mists to all the mountain side :  
For here two brothers, one a king, had met  
And fought together ; but their names were lost.  
And each had slain his brother at a blow,  
And down they fell and made the glen abhorr'd :  
And there they lay till all their bones were bleach'd,  
And lichen'd into color with the crags :  
And he that once was king had on a crown  
Of diamonds, one in front, and four aside.  
And Arthur came, and laboring up the pass  
All in a misty moonshine, unawares  
Had trodden that crown'd skeleton, and the skull  
Brake from the nape, and from the skull the crown  
Roll'd into light, and turning on its rims  
Fled like a glittering rivulet to the tarn :  
And down the shingly scaur he plunged, and caught,

And set it on his head, and in his heart  
Heard murmurs 'lo, thou likewise shalt be king.'

Thereafter, when a king, he had the gems  
Pluck'd from the crown, and show'd them to his knights,  
Saying 'these jewels, whereupon I chanced  
Divinely, are the kingdom's not the king's —  
For public use : henceforward let there be,  
Once every year, a joust for one of these :  
For so by nine years' proof we needs must learn  
Which is our mightiest, and ourselves shall grow  
In use of arms and manhood, till we drive  
The Heathen, who, some say, shall rule the land  
Hereafter, which God hinder.' Thus he spoke :  
And eight years past, eight jousts had been, and still  
Had Lancelot won the diamond of the year,  
With purpose to present them to the Queen,  
When all were won ; but meaning all at once  
To snare her royal fancy with a boon  
Worth half her realm, had never spoken word.

Now for the central diamond and the last  
And largest, Arthur, holding then his court  
Hard on the river nigh the place which now  
Is this world's hugest, let proclaim a joust  
At Camelot, and when the time drew nigh  
Spake (for she had been sick) to Guinevere  
'Are you so sick, my Queen, you cannot move  
To these fair jousts ?' 'Yea, lord,' she said, 'you know it.'  
'Then will you miss,' he answer'd, 'the great deeds  
Of Lancelot, and his prowess in the lists,  
A sight you love to look on.' And the Queen  
Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt languidly  
On Lancelot, where he stood beside the King.  
He thinking that he read her meaning there,

'Stay with me, I am sick ; my love is more  
Than many diamonds,' yielded, and a heart,  
Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen  
(However much he yearn'd to make complete  
The tale of diamonds for his destined boon)  
Urged him to speak against the truth, and say,  
'Sir King, mine ancient wound is hardly whole,  
And lets me from the saddle ;' and the King  
Glanced first at him, then her, and went his way.  
No sooner gone than suddenly shê began.

'To blame, my lord Sir Lancelot, much to blame.  
Why go you not to these fair jousts ? the knights  
Are half of them our enemies, and the crowd  
Will murmur, lo the shameless ones, who take  
Their pastime now the trustful king is gone !'  
Then Lancelot vext at having lied in vain :  
'Are you so wise ? you were not once so wise,  
My Queen, that summer, when you loved me first.  
Then of the crowd you took no more account  
Than of the myriad cricket of the mead,  
When its own voice clings to each blade of grass,  
And every voice is nothing. As to knights,  
Them surely can I silence with all ease.  
But now my loyal worship is allow'd  
Of all men : many a bard, without offence,  
Has link'd our names together in his lay,  
Lancelot, the flower of bravery, Guinevere,  
The pearl of beauty : and our knights at feast  
Have pledged us in this union, while the king  
Would listen smiling. How then ? is there more ?  
Has Arthur spoken aught ? or would yourself,  
Now weary of my service and devoir,  
Henceforth be truer to your faultless lord ?'

She broke into a little scornful laugh.  
‘Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the faultless King,  
That passionate perfection, my good lord —  
But who can gaze upon the Sun in heaven ?  
He never spake word of reproach to me,  
He never had a glimpse of mine untruth,  
He cares not for me : only here to-day  
There gleam’d a vague suspicion in his eyes :  
Some meddling rogue has tamper’d with him — else  
Rapt in this fancy of his Table Round,  
And swearing men to vows impossible,  
To make them like himself : but, friend, to me  
He is all fault who hath no fault at all :  
For who loves me must have a touch of earth ;  
The low sun makes the color : I am yours,  
Not Arthur’s, as you know, save by the bond.  
And therefore hear my words : go to the jousts :  
The tiny-trumpeting gnat can break our dream  
When sweetest ; and the vermin voices here  
May buzz so loud — we scorn them, but they sting.’

Then answer’d Lancelot, the chief of knights.  
‘And with what face, after my pretext made,  
Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot, I  
Before a king who honors his own word,  
As if it were his God’s ?’

‘Yea,’ said the Queen,  
‘A moral child without the craft to rule,  
Else had he not lost me : but listen to me,  
If I must find you wit : we hear it said  
That men go down before your spear at a touch.  
But knowing you are Lancelot ; your great name,  
This conquers : hide it therefore ; go unknown :  
Win ! by this kiss you will : and our true king

Will then allow your pretext, O my knight,  
As all for glory ; for to speak him true,  
You know right well, how meek soe'er he seem,  
No keener hunter after glory breathes.  
He loves it in his knights more than himself :  
'They prove to him his work : win and return.'

Then got Sir Lancelot suddenly to horse,  
Wroth at himself : not willing to be known,  
He left the barren-beaten thoroughfare,  
Chose the green path that show'd the rarer foot,  
And there among the solitary downs,  
Full often lost in fancy, lost his way ;  
Till as he traced a faintly-shadow'd track,  
That all in loops and links among the dales  
Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw  
Fired from the west, far on a hill, the towers.  
Thither he made and wound the gateway horn.  
Then came an old, dumb, myriad-wrinkled man,  
Who let him into lodging and disarm'd.  
And Lancelot marvell'd at the wordless man ;  
And issuing found the Lord of Astolat  
With two strong sons, Sir Torre and Sir Lavaine,  
Moving to meet him in the castle court ;  
And close behind them stept the lily maid  
Elaine, his daughter : mother of the house  
There was not : some light jest among them rose  
With laughter dying down as the great knight  
Approach'd them : then the Lord of Astolat.  
'Whence comest thou, my guest, and by what name  
Livest between the lips ? for by thy state  
And presence I might guess thee chief of those,  
After the king, who eat in Arthur's halls.  
Him have I seen : the rest, his Table Round,  
Known as they are, to me they are unknown.'

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of knights.  
'Known am I, and of Arthur's hall, and known,  
What I by mere mischance have brought, my shield.  
But since I go to joust as one unknown  
At Camelot for the diamond, ask me not,  
Hereafter you shall know me — and the shield —  
I pray you lend me one, if such you have,  
Blank, or at least with some device not mine.'

Then said the Lord of Astolat, 'Here is Torre's :  
Hurt in his first tilt was my son, Sir Torre.  
And so, God wot, his shield is blank enough.  
His you can have.' Then added plain Sir Torre,  
'Yea since I cannot use it, you may have it.'  
Here laugh'd the father saying 'Fie, Sir Churl,  
Is that an answer for a noble knight ?  
Allow him : but Lavaine, my younger here,  
He is so full of lustihood, he will ride  
Joust for it, and win, and bring it in an hour  
And set it in this damsel's golden hair,  
To make her thrice as wilful as before.'

'Nay, father, nay good father, shame me not  
Before this noble knight' said young Lavaine  
'For nothing. Surely I but play'd on Torre :  
He seem'd so sullen, vext he could not go :  
A jest, no more : for, knight, the maiden dreamt  
That some one put this diamond in her hand,  
And that it was too slippery to be held,  
And slipt and fell into some pool or stream,  
The castle-well, belike ; and then I said  
That *if* I went and *if* I fought and won it  
(But all was jest and joke among ourselves)  
Then must she keep it safelier. All was jest.

But father give me leave, an if he will,  
To ride to Camelot with this noble knight :  
Win shall I not, but do my best to win :  
Young as I am, yet would I do my best.'

'So you will grace me,' answer'd Lancelot,  
Smiling a moment, 'with your fellowship  
O'er these waste downs whereon I lost myself,  
Then were I glad of you as guide and friend ;  
And you shall win this diamond — as I hear,  
It is a fair large diamond, — if you may,  
And yield it to this maiden, if you will.'  
'A fair large diamond,' added plain Sir Torre,  
'Such be for Queens and not for simple maids.'  
Then she, who held her eyes upon the ground,  
Elaine, and heard her name so tost about,  
Flush'd slightly at the slight disparagement  
Before the stranger knight, who, looking at her,  
Full courtly, yet not falsely, thus return'd.  
'If what is fair be but for what is fair,  
And only Queens are to be counted so,  
Rash were my judgment then, who deem this maid  
Might wear as fair a jewel as is on earth,  
Not violating the bond of like to like.'

He spoke and ceased : the lily maid Elaine,  
Won by the mellow voice before she look'd,  
Lifted her eyes, and read his lineaments.  
The great and guilty love he bare the Queen,  
In battle with the love he bare his lord,  
Had marr'd his face, and mark'd it ere his time.  
Another sinning on such heights with one,  
The flower of all the west and all the world,  
Had been the sleeker for it : but in him  
His mood was often like a fiend, and rose



And drove him into wastes and solitudes  
For agony, who was yet a living soul.  
Marr'd as he was, he seem'd the goodliest man,  
That ever among ladies ate in Hall,  
And noblest, when she lifted up her eyes.  
However marr'd, of more than twice her years,  
Seam'd with an ancient swordcut on the cheek,  
And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up her eyes  
And loved him, with that love which was her doom.

Then the great knight, the darling of the court,  
Loved of the loveliest, into that rude hall  
Stept with all grace, and not with half disdain  
Hid under grace, as in a smaller time,  
But kindly man moving among his kind :  
Whom they with meats and vintage of their best  
And talk and minstrel melody entertain'd.  
And much they ask'd of court and Table Round,  
And ever well and readily answer'd he :  
But Lancelot, when they glanced at Guinevere,  
Suddenly speaking of the wordless man,  
Heard from the Baron that, ten years before,  
The heathen caught and reft him of his tongue.  
'He learnt and warn'd me of their fierce design  
Against my house, and him they caught and maim'd ;  
But I my sons and little daughter fled  
From bonds or death, and dwelt among the woods  
By the great river in a boatman's hut.  
Dull days were those, till our good Arthur broke  
The Pagan yet once more on Badon hill.'

'O there, great Lord, doubtless,' Lavaine said, rapt  
By all the sweet and sudden passion of youth  
Toward greatness in its elder, 'you have fought.



O tell us ; for we live apart, you know  
Of Arthur's glorious wars.' And Lancelot spoke  
And answer'd him at full, as having been  
With Arthur in the fight which all day long  
Rang by the white mouth of the violent Glem ;  
And in the four wld battles by the shore  
Of Duglas ; that on Bassa ; then the war  
That thunder'd in and out the gloomy skirts  
Of Celidon the forest ; and again  
By castle Gurnion where the glorious King  
Had on his cuirass worn our Lady's Head,  
Carved of one emerald, center'd in a sun  
Of silver rays, that lighten'd as he breathed ;  
And at Caerleon had he help'd his lord,  
When the strong neighings of the wild white Horse  
Set every gilded parapet shuddering ;  
And up in Agned Cathregonion too,  
And down the waste sand-shores of Trath Treroit,  
Where many a heathen fell ; 'and on the mount  
Of Badon I myself beheld the King  
Charge at the head of all his Table Round,  
And all his legions crying Christ and him,  
And break them ; and I saw him, after, stand  
High on a heap of slain, from spur to plume  
Red as the rising sun with heathen blood,  
And seeing me, with a great voice he cried  
" They are broken, they are broken " for the King,  
However mild he seems at home, nor cares  
For triumph in our mimic wars, the jousts —  
For if his own knight cast him down, he laughs  
Saying, his knights are better men than he —  
Yet in this heathen war the fire of God  
Fills him : I never saw his like : there lives  
No greater leader.'

While he utter'd this,  
Low to her own heart said the lily maid  
'Save your great self, fair lord ;' and when he fell  
From talk of war to traits of pleasantry —  
Being mirthful he but in a stately kind —  
She still took note that when the living smile  
Died from his lips, across him came a cloud  
Of melancholy severe, from which again,  
Whenever in her hovering to and fro  
The lily maid had striven to make him cheer,  
There brake a sudden-beaming tenderness  
Of manners and of nature : and she thought  
That all was nature, all, perchance, for her.  
And all night long his face before her lived,  
As when a painter, poring on a face,  
Divinely thro' all hindrance finds the man  
Behind it, and so paints him that his face,  
The shape and color of a mind and life,  
Lives for his children, ever at its best  
And fullest ; so the face before her lived,  
Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence, full  
Of noble things, and held her from her sleep.  
Till rathe she rose, half-cheated in the thought  
She needs must bid farewell to sweet Lavaine.  
First as in fear, step after step, she stole  
Down the long tower-stairs, hesitating :  
Anon, she heard Sir Lancelot cry in the court,  
'This shield, my friend, where is it ?' and Lavaine  
Past inward, as she came from out the tower.  
There to his proud horse Lancelot turn'd, and smooth'd  
The glossy shoulder, humming to himself.  
Half-envious of the flattering hand, she drew  
Nearer and stood. He look'd, and more amazed  
Than if seven men had set upon him, saw

The maiden standing in the dewy light.  
He had not dream'd she was so beautiful.  
Then came on him a sort of sacred fear,  
For silent, tho' he greeted her, she stood  
Rapt on his face as if it were a God's.  
Suddenly flash'd on her a wild desire,  
That he should wear her favor at the tilt.  
She braved a riotous heart in asking for it.  
'Fair lord, whose name I know not — noble it is,  
I well believe, the noblest — will you wear  
My favor at this tourney?' 'Nay,' said he,  
'Fair lady, since I never yet have worn  
Favor of any lady in the lists.  
Such is my wont, as those, who know me, know.'  
'Yea, so,' she answer'd; 'then in wearing mine  
Needs must be lesser likelihood, noble lord,  
That those who know should know you.' And he turn'd  
Her counsel up and down within his mind,  
And found it true, and answer'd, 'true, my child.  
Well, I will wear it: fetch it out to me:  
What is it?' and she told him 'a red sleeve  
Broider'd with pearls,' and brought it: then he bound  
Her token on his helmet, with a smile  
Saying, 'I never yet have done so much  
For any maiden living,' and the blood  
Sprang to her face, and fill'd her with delight;  
But left her all the paler, when Lavaine  
Returning brought the yet-unblazon'd shield,  
His brother's; which he gave to Lancelot,  
Who parted with his own to fair Elaine;  
'Do me this grace, my child, to have my shield.  
In keeping till I come.' 'A grace to me,'  
She answer'd, 'twice to-day. I am your Squire.'  
Whereat Lavaine said, laughing, 'Lily maid,

For fear our people call you lily maid  
In earnest, let me bring your color back ;  
Once, twice, and thrice : now get you hence to bed :  
So kiss'd her, and Sir Lancelot his own hand,  
And thus they moved away : she stay'd a minute,  
Then made a sudden step to the gate, and there —  
Her bright hair blown about the serious face  
Yet rosy-kindled with her brother's kiss —  
Paused in the gateway, standing by the shield  
In silence, while she watch'd their arms far-off  
Sparkle, until they dipt below the downs.  
Then to her tower she climb'd, and took the shield,  
There kept it, and so lived in fantasy.

Meanwhile the new companions past away  
Far o'er the long backs of the bushless downs,  
To where Sir Lancelot knew there lived a knight  
Not far from Camelot, now for forty years  
A hermit, who had pray'd, labor'd and pray'd  
And ever laboring had scoop'd himself  
In the white rock a chapel and a hall  
On massive columns, like a shorecliff cave,  
And cells and chambers : all were fair and dry ;  
The green light from the meadows underneath  
Struck up and lived along the milky roofs ;  
And in the meadows tremulous aspen-trees  
And poplars made a noise of falling showers.  
And thither wending there that night they bode.

But when the next day broke from underground,  
And shot red fire and shadows thro' the cave,  
They rose, heard mass, broke fast, and rode away :  
Then Lancelot saying, 'hear, but hold my name  
Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of the Lake,'

Abash'd Lavaine, whose instant reverence,  
Dearer to true young hearts than their own praise,  
But left him leave to stammer, 'is it indeed ?'  
And after muttering 'the great Lancelot'  
At last he got his breath and answer'd 'One,  
One have I seen — that other, our liege lord,  
The dread Pendragon, Britain's king of kings,  
Of whom the people talk mysteriously,  
He will be there — then were I stricken blind  
That minute, I might say that I had seen.'

So spake Lavaine, and when they reach'd the lists  
By Camelot in the meadow, let his eyes  
Run thro' the peopled gallery which half round  
Lay like a rainbow fall'n upon the grass,  
Until they found the clear-faced King, who sat  
Robed in red samite, easily to be known,  
Since to his crown the golden dragon clung,  
And down his robe the dragon writhed in gold,  
And from the carven-work behind him crept  
Two dragons gilded, sloping down to make  
Arms for his chair, while all the rest of them  
Thro' knots and loops and folds innumerable  
Fled ever thro' the woodwork, till they found  
The new design wherein they lost themselves,  
Yet with all ease, so tender was the work :  
And, in the costly canopy o'er him set,  
Blazed the last diamond of the nameless king.

Then Lancelot answer'd young Lavaine and said,  
'Me you call great : mine is the firmer seat,  
The truer lance : but there is many a youth  
Now crescent, who will come to all I am  
And overcome it ; and in me there dwells

No greatness, save it be some far-off touch  
Of greatness to know well I am not great :  
There is the man.' And Lavaine gaped upon him  
As on a thing miraculous, and anon  
The trumpets blew ; and then did either side,  
They that assail'd, and they that held the lists,  
Set lance in rest, strike spur, suddenly move,  
Meet in the midst, and there so furiously  
Shock, that a man far-off might well perceive,  
If any man that day were left afield,  
The hard earth shake, and a low thunder of arms.  
And Lancelot bode a little, till he saw  
Which were the weaker ; then he hurl'd into it  
Against the stronger : little need to speak  
Of Lancelot in his glory : King, duke, earl,  
Count, baron — whom he smote, he overthrew.

But in the field were Lancelot's kith and kin,  
Ranged with the Table Round that held the lists,  
Strong men, and wrathful that a stranger knight  
Should do and almost overdo the deeds  
Of Lancelot ; and one said to the other ' Lo !  
What is he ? I do not mean the force alone,  
The grace and versatility of the man —  
Is it not Lancelot ! ' ' When has Lancelot worn  
Favor of any lady in the lists ?  
Not such his wont, as we, that know him, know.'  
' How then ? who then ? ' a fury seized on them,  
A fiery family passion for the name  
Of Lancelot, and a glory one with theirs.  
They couch'd their spears and prick'd their steeds and  
thus,  
Their plumes driv'n backward by the wind they made  
In moving, all together down upon him

Bare, as a wild wave in the wide North-sea,  
Green-glimmering toward the summit, bears, with all  
Its stormy crests that smoke against the skies,  
Down on a bark, and overbears the bark,  
And him that helms it, so they overbore  
Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a spear  
Down-glancing lamed the charger, and a spear  
Prick'd sharply his own cuirass, and the head  
Pierced thro' his side, and there snap, and remain'd.

Then Sir Lavaine did well and worshipfully ;  
He bore a knight of old repute to the earth,  
And brought his horse to Lancelot where he lay.  
He up the side, sweating with agony, got,  
But thought to do while he might yet endure,  
And being lustily holpen by the rest,  
His party, — tho' it seemed half-miracle  
To those he fought with — drave his kith and kin,  
And all the Table Round that held the lists,  
Back to the barrier ; then the heralds blew  
Proclaiming his the prize, who wore the sleeve  
Of scarlet, and the pearls ; and all the knights,  
His party, cried ' Advance, and take your prize  
The diamond ; ' but he answer'd, ' diamond me  
No diamonds ! for God's love, a little air !  
Prize me no prizes, for my prize is death !  
Hence will I and I charge you, follow me not.'

He spoke, and vanish'd suddenly from the field  
With young Lavaine into the poplar grove.  
There from his charger down he slid, and sat,  
Gasping to Sir Lavaine, ' draw the lance-head : '  
' Ah my sweet lord Sir Lancelot,' said Lavaine,  
' I dread me, if I draw it, you will die.'



But he 'I die already with it : draw —  
Draw' — and Lavaine drew, and that other gave  
A marvellous great shriek and ghastly groan,  
And half his blood burst forth, and down he sank  
For the pure pain, and wholly swoon'd away.  
Then came the hermit out and bare him in,  
There stanch'd his wound ; and there, in daily doubt  
Whether to live or die, for many a week  
Hid from the wide world's rumor by the grove  
Of poplars with their noise of falling showers,  
And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, he lay.

But on that day when Lancelot fled the lists,  
His party, knights of utmost North and West,  
Lords of waste marches, kings of desolate isles,  
Came round their great Pendragon, saying to him  
'Lo, Sire, our knight thro' whom we won the day  
Hath gone sore wounded, and hath left his prize  
Untaken, crying that his prize is death.'  
'Heaven hinder,' said the King, 'that such an one,  
So great a knight as we have seen to-day —  
He seem'd to me another Lancelot —  
Yea, twenty times I thought him Lancelot —  
He must not pass uncared for. Gawain, rise,  
My nephew, and ride forth and find the knight.  
Wounded and wearied needs must he be near.  
I charge you that you get at once to horse.  
And, knights and kings, there breathes not one of you  
Will deem this prize of ours is rashly given :  
His prowess was too wondrous. We will do him  
No customary honor : since the knight  
Came not to us, of us to claim the prize,  
Ourselves will send it after. Wherefore take  
This diamond, and deliver it, and return,



And bring us what he is and how he fares,  
And cease not from your quest, until you find.'

So saying from the carven flower above,  
To which it made a restless heart, he took,  
And gave, the diamond : then from where he sat  
At Arthur's right, with smiling face arose,  
With smiling face and frowning heart, a Prince  
In the mid might and flourish of his May,  
Gawain, surnamed The Courteous, fair and strong,  
And after Lancelot, Tristram, and Geraint  
And Lamorack, a good knight, but therewithal  
Sir Modred's brother, of a crafty house,  
Nor often loyal to his word, and now  
Wroth that the king's command to sally forth  
In quest of whom he knew not, made him leave  
The banquet, and concourse of knights and kings.

So all in wrath he got to horse and went ;  
While Arthur to the banquet, dark in mood,  
Past, thinking 'is it Lancelot who has come  
Despite the wound he spake of, all for gain  
Of glory, and has added wound to wound,  
And ridd'n away to die ?' So fear'd the King,  
And, after two days' tarrance there, return'd.  
Then when he saw the Queen, embracing ask'd,  
'Love, are you yet so sick ?' 'Nay, lord,' she said.  
'And where is Lancelot ?' Then the Queen amazed  
'Was he not with you ? won he not your prize ?'  
'Nay, but one like him.' 'Why that like was he.'  
And when the King demanded how she knew,  
Said 'Lord, no sooner had you parted from us,  
Than Lancelot told me of a common talk  
That men went down before his spear at a touch,

But knowing he was Lancelot ; his great name  
Conquer'd ; and therefore would he hide his name  
From all men, ev'n the king, and to this end  
Had made the pretext of a hindering wound,  
That he might joust unknown of all, and learn  
If his old prowess were in aught decay'd :  
And added, "our true Arthur, when he learns,  
Will well allow my pretext, as for gain  
Of purer glory."

Then replied the King :

'Far lovelier in our Lancelot had it been,  
In lieu of idly dallying with the truth,  
To have trusted me as he has trusted you.  
Surely his king and most familiar friend  
Might well have kept his secret. True, indeed,  
Albeit I know my knights fantastical,  
So fine a fear in our large Lancelot  
Must needs have moved my laughter : now remains  
But little cause for laughter : his own kin —  
Ill news, my Queen, for all who love him, these !  
His kith and kin, not knowing, set upon him ;  
So that he went sore wounded from the field :  
Yet good news too : for goodly hopes are mine  
That Lancelot is no more a lonely heart.  
He wore, against his wont, upon his helm  
A sleeve of scarlet, broidered with great pearls,  
Some gentle maiden's gift.'

'Yea, lord,' she said,  
'Your hopes are mine,' and saying that she choked,  
And sharply turn'd about to hide her face,  
Moved to her chamber, and there flung herself  
Down on the great King's couch, and writhed upon it,  
And clench'd her fingers till they bit the palm,  
And shriek'd out 'traitor' to the unhearing wall,

Then flash'd into wild tears, and rose again,  
And moved about her palace, proud and pale.

Gawain the while thro' all the region round  
Rode with his diamond, wearied of the quest,  
Touch'd at all points, except the poplar grove,  
And came at last, tho' late, to Astolat :  
Whom glittering in enamell'd arms the maid  
Glanced at, and cried 'What news from Camelot, lord ?  
What of the knight with the red sleeve ?' 'He won.'  
'I knew it,' she said. 'But parted from the jousts  
Hurt in the side,' whereat she caught her breath.  
Thro' her own side she felt the sharp lance go ;  
Thereon she smote her hand : well-nigh she swoon'd :  
And, while he gazed wonderingly at her, came  
The lord of Astolat out, to whom the Prince  
Reported who he was, and on what quest  
Sent, that he bore the prize and could not find  
The victor, but had ridden wildly round  
To seek him, and was wearied of the search.  
To whom the lord of Astolat 'Bide with us,  
And ride no longer wildly, noble Prince !  
Here was the knight, and here he left a shield ;  
This will he send or come for : furthermore  
Our son is with him ; we shall hear anon,  
Needs must we hear.' To this the courteous Prince  
Accorded with his wonted courtesy,  
Courtesy with a touch of traitor in it,  
And stay'd ; and cast his eyes on fair Elaine :  
Where could be found face daintier ? then her shape  
From forehead down to foot perfect — again  
From foot to forehead exquisitely turn'd :  
'Well — if I bide, lo ! this wild flower for me !'  
And oft they met among the garden yews,

And there he set himself to play upon her  
With sallying wit, free flashes from a height  
Above her, graces of the court, and songs,  
Sighs, and slow smiles, and golden eloquence  
And amorous adulation, till the maid  
Rebell'd against it, saying to him, 'Prince,  
O loyal nephew of our noble King,  
Why ask you not to see the shield he left,  
Whence you might learn his name? Why slight your King,  
And lose the quest he sent you on, and prove  
No surer than our falcon yesterday,  
Who lost the henn we slipt him at, and went  
To all the winds?' 'Nay, by mine head,' said he,  
'I lose it, as we lose the lark in heaven,  
O damsel, in the light of your blue eyes:  
But an you will it let me see the shield.'  
And when the shield was brought, and Gawain saw  
Sir Lancelot's azure lions, crown'd with gold,  
Ramp in the field, he smote his thigh, and mock'd;  
'Right was the King! our Lancelot! that true man!'  
'And right was I,' she answer'd merrily, 'I,  
Who dream'd my knight the greatest knight of all.'  
'And if I dream'd,' said Gawain, 'that you love  
This greatest knight, your pardon! lo, you know it!  
Speak therefore: shall I waste myself in vain?'  
Full simple was her answer 'What know I?  
My brethren have been all my fellowship,  
And I, when often they have talk'd of love,  
Wish'd it had been my mother, for they talk'd,  
Meseem'd, of what they knew not; so myself—  
I know not if I know what true love is,  
But if I know, then, if I love not him,  
Methinks there is none other I can love.'  
'Yea, by God's death,' said he, 'you love him well,

But would not, knew you what all others know,  
And whom he loves.' 'So be it,' cried Elaine,  
And lifted her fair face and moved away :  
But he pursued her calling 'Stay a little !  
One golden minute's grace : he wore your sleeve :  
Would he break faith with one I may not name ?  
Must our true man change like a leaf at last ?  
May it be so ? why then, far be it from me  
To cross our mighty Lancelot in his loves !  
And, damsel, for I deem you know full well  
Where your great knight is hidden, let me leave  
My quest with you ; the diamond also : here !  
For if you love, it will be sweet to give it ;  
And if he love, it will be sweet to have it  
From your own hand ; and whether he love or not,  
A diamond is a diamond. Fare you well  
A thousand times ! — a thousand times farewell !  
Yet, if he love, and his love hold, we two  
May meet at court hereafter : there, I think,  
So you will learn the courtesies of the court,  
We two shall know each other.'

Then he gave,  
And slightly kiss'd the hand to which he gave,  
The diamond, and all wearied of the quest  
Leapt on his horse, and carolling as he went  
A true-love ballad, lightly rode away.

Thence to the court he past ; there told the King  
What the King knew 'Sir Lancelot is the knight.'  
And added 'Sire, my liege, so much I learnt ;  
But fail'd to find him tho' I rode all round  
The region : but I lighted on the maid,  
Whose sleeve he wore ; she loves him ; and to her,  
Deeming our courtesy is the truest law,

I gave the diamond : she will render it ;  
For by mine head she knows his hiding-place.'

The seldom-frowning King frown'd, and replied,  
'Too courteous truly ! you shall go no more  
On quest of mine, seeing that you forget  
Obedience is the courtesy due to kings.'

He spake and parted. Wroth but all in awe,  
For twenty strokes of the blood, without a word,  
Linger'd that other, staring after him ;  
Then shook his hair, strode off, and buzz'd abroad  
About the maid of Astolat, and her love.  
All ears were prick'd at once, all tongues were loosed :  
'The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lancelot,  
Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Astolat.'  
Some read the King's face, some the Queen's, and all  
Had marvel what the maid might be, but most  
Predoom'd her as unworthy. One old dame  
Came suddenly on the Queen with the sharp news.  
She, that had heard the noise of it before,  
But sorrowing Lancelot should have stoop'd so low,  
Marr'd her friend's point with pale tranquillity.  
So ran the tale like fire about the court,  
Fire in dry stubble a nine days' wonder flared :  
Till ev'n the knights at banquet twice or thrice  
Forgot to drink to Lancelot and the Queen,  
And pledging Lancelot and the lily maid  
Smiled at each other, while the Queen who sat  
With lips severely placid felt the knot  
Climb in her throat, and with her feet unseen  
Crush'd the wild passion out against the floor  
Beneath the banquet, where the meats became  
As wormwood, and she hated all who pledged.

But far away the maid in Astolat,  
Her guiltless rival, she that ever kept  
The one-day-seen Sir Lancelot in her heart,  
Crept to her father, while he mused alone,  
Sat on his knee, stroked his gray face and said.  
'Father, you call me wilful, and the fault  
Is yours who let me have my will, and now,  
Sweet father, will you let me lose my wits?'  
'Nay,' said he, 'surely.' 'Wherefore let me hence,'  
She answer'd, 'and find out our dear Lavaine.'  
'You will not lose your wits for dear Lavaine :  
Bide,' answer'd he : 'we needs must hear anon  
Of him, and of that other.' 'Ay,' she said,  
'And of that other, for I needs must hence  
And find that other, wheresoe'er he be,  
And with mine own hand give his diamond to him,  
Lest I be found as faithless in the quest  
As yon proud Prince who left the quest to me.  
Sweet father, I behold him in my dreams  
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,  
Death-pale, for lack of gentle maiden's aid.  
The gentler-born the maiden, the more bound,  
My father, to be sweet and serviceable  
To noble knights in sickness, as you know,  
When these have worn their tokens : let me hence  
I pray you.' Then her father nodding said,  
'Ay, ay, the diamond : wit you well, my child,  
Right fain were I to learn this knight were whole,  
Being our greatest : yea, and you must give it —  
And sure I think this fruit is hung too high  
For any mouth to gape for save a Queen's —  
Nay, I mean nothing : so then, get you gone,  
Being so very wilful you must go.'



Lightly, her suit allow'd, she slipt away,  
And while she made her ready for her ride,  
Her father's latest word humm'd in her ear,  
'Being so very wilful you must go,'  
And changed itself and echoed in her heart,  
'Being so very wilful you must die.'  
But she was happy enough and shook it off,  
As we shake off the bee that buzzes at us ;  
And in her heart she answer'd it and said,  
'What matter, so I help him back to life ?'  
Then far away with good Sir Torre for guide  
Rode o'er the long backs of the bushless downs  
To Camelot, and before the city-gates  
Came on her brother with a happy face  
Making a roan horse caper and curvet  
For pleasure all about a field of flowers :  
Whom when she saw, 'Lavaine,' she cried, 'Lavaine,  
How fares my lord Sir Lancelot ?' He amazed,  
'Torre and Elaine ! why here ? Sir Lancelot !  
How know you my lord's name is Lancelot ?'  
But when the maid had told him all her tale,  
Then turn'd Sir Torre, and being in his moods  
Left them, and under the strange-statued gate,  
Where Arthur's wars were render'd mystically,  
Past up the still rich city to his kin,  
His own far blood, which dwelt at Camelot ;  
And her Lavaine across the poplar grove  
Led to the caves : there first she saw the casque  
Of Lancelot on the wall : her scarlet sleeve,  
Tho' carved and cut, and half the pearls away,  
Stream'd from it still ; and in her heart she laugh'd,  
Because he had not loosed it from his helm,  
But meant once more perchance to tourney in it.  
And when they gain'd the cell in which he slept,



His battle-writhen arms and mighty hands  
Lay naked on the wolfskin, and a dream  
Of dragging down his enemy made them move.  
Then she that saw him lying unsleek, unshorn,  
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,  
Utter'd a little tender dolorous cry.  
The sound not wonted in a place so still  
Woke the sick knight, and while he roll'd his eyes  
Yet blank from sleep, she started to him, saying  
'Your prize the diamond sent you by the King :'  
His eyes glisten'd : she fancied 'is it for me ?'  
And when the maid had told him all the tale  
Of King and Prince, the diamond sent, the quest  
Assign'd to her not worthy of it, she knelt  
Full lowly by the corners of his bed,  
And laid the diamond in his open hand.  
Her face was near, and as we kiss the child  
That does the task assign'd, he kiss'd her face.  
At once she slipt like water to the floor.  
'Alas,' he said, 'your ride has wearied you.  
Rest must you have.' 'No rest for me,' she said ;  
'Nay, for near you, fair lord, I am at rest.'  
What might she mean by that ? his large black eyes,  
Yet larger thro' his leanness, dwelt upon her,  
Till all her heart's sad secret blazed itself  
In the heart's colors on her simple face ;  
And Lancelot look'd and was perplexed in mind,  
And being weak in body said no more ;  
But did not love the color ; woman's love,  
Save one, he not regarded, and so turn'd  
Sighing, and feign'd a sleep until he slept.

Then rose Elaine and glided thro' the fields,  
And past beneath the wildly-sculptured gates

Far up the dim rich city to her kin ;  
There bode the night : but woke with dawn, and past  
Down thro' the dim rich city to the fields,  
Thence to the cave : so day by day she past  
In either twilight ghost-like to and fro  
Gliding, and every day she tended him,  
And likewise many a night : and Lancelot  
Would, tho' he call'd his wound a little hurt  
Whereof he should be quickly whole, at times  
Brain-feverous in his heat and agony, seem  
Uncourteous, even he : but the meek maid  
Sweetly forbore him ever, being to him  
Meeker than any child to a rough nurse,  
Milder than any mother to a sick child,  
And never woman yet, since man's first fall,  
Did kindlier unto man, but her deep love  
Upbore her ; till the hermit, skill'd in all  
The simples and the science of that time,  
Told him that her fine care had saved his life.  
And the sick man forgot her simple blush,  
Would call her friend and sister, sweet Elaine,  
Would listen for her coming and regret  
Her parting step, and held her tenderly,  
And loved her with all love except the love  
Of man and woman when they love their best  
Closest and sweetest, and had died the death  
In any knightly fashion for her sake.  
And peradventure had he seen her first  
She might have made this and that other world  
Another world for the sick man ; but now  
The shackles of an old love straiten'd him,  
His honor rooted in dishonor stood,  
And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.

Yet the great knight in his mid-sickness made  
Full many a holy vow and pure resolve.  
These, as but born of sickness, could not live :  
For when the blood ran lustier in him again,  
Full often the sweet image of one face,  
Making a treacherous quiet in his heart,  
Dispersed his resolution like a cloud.  
Then if the maiden, while that ghostly grace  
Beam'd on his fancy, spoke, he answer'd not,  
Or short and coldly, and she knew right well  
What the rough sickness meant, but what this meant  
She knew not, and the sorrow dimm'd her sight,  
And drave her ere her time across the fields  
Far into the rich city, where alone  
She murmur'd 'vain, in vain: it cannot be.  
He will not love me: how then? must I die.'  
Then as a little helpless innocent bird,  
That has but one plain passage of few notes,  
Will sing the simple passage o'er and o'er  
For all an April morning, till the ear  
Wearies to hear it, so the simple maid  
Went half the night repeating, 'must I die?'  
And now to right she turn'd, and now to left,  
And found no ease in turning or in rest;  
And 'him or death' she mutter'd, 'death or him,'  
Again and like a burthen, 'him or death.'

But when Sir Lancelot's deadly hurt was whole,  
To Astolat returning rode the three.  
There morn by morn, arraying her sweet self  
In that wherein she deem'd she look'd her best,  
She came before Sir Lancelot, for she thought  
'If I be loved, these are my festal robes,  
If not, the victim's flowers before he fall.'

And Lancelot ever prest upon the maid  
That she should ask some goodly gift of him  
For her own self or hers ; 'and do not shun  
To speak the wish most near to your true heart ;  
Such service have you done me, that I make  
My will of yours, and Prince and Lord am I  
In mine own land, and what I will I can.'  
Then like a ghost she lifted up her face,  
But like a ghost without the power to speak.  
And Lancelot saw that she withheld her wish,  
And bode among them yet a little space  
Till he should learn it ; and one morn it chanced  
He found her in among the garden yews,  
And said, ' Delay no longer, speak your wish,  
Seeing I must go to-day : ' then out she brake ;  
' Going ? and we shall never see you more.  
And I must die for want of one bold word.'  
' Speak : that I live to hear,' he said, ' is yours.'  
Then suddenly and passionately she spoke :  
' I have gone mad. I love you : let me die.'  
' Ah sister,' answer'd Lancelot, ' what is this ?'  
And innocently extending her white arms, '  
' Your love,' she said, ' your love — to be your wife.'  
And Lancelot answer'd, ' Had I chos'n to wed,  
I had been wedded earlier, sweet Elaine :  
But now there never will be wife of mine.'  
' No, no,' she cried, ' I care not to be wife,  
But to be with you still, to see your face,  
To serve you, and to follow you thro' the world.'  
And Lancelot answer'd, ' Nay, the world, the world,  
All ear and eye, with such a stupid heart  
To interpret ear and eye, and such a tongue  
To blare its own interpretation — nay,  
Full ill then should I quit your brother's love,

And your good father's kindness.' And she said  
'Not to be with you, not to see your face —  
Alas for me then, my good days are done.'  
'Nay, noble maid,' he answer'd, 'ten times nay!  
This is not love: but love's first flash in youth,  
Most common: yea I know it of mine own self:  
And you yourself will smile at your own self  
Hereafter, when you yield your flower of life  
To one more fitly yours, not thrice your age:  
And then will I, for true you are and sweet  
Beyond mine old belief in womanhood,  
More specially should your good knight be poor,  
Endow you with broad land and territory  
Even to the half my realm beyond the seas,  
So that would make you happy: furthermore,  
Ev'n to the death, as tho' you were my blood,  
In all your quarrels will I be your knight.  
This will I do, dear damsel, for your sake,  
And more than this I cannot.'

While he spoke  
She neither blush'd nor shook, but deathly-pale  
Stood grasping what was nearest, then replied;  
'Of all this will I nothing;' and so fell,  
And thus they bore her swooning to her tower.

Then spake, to whom thro' those black walls of yew  
Their talk had pierced, her father. 'Ay, a flash,  
I fear me, that will strike my blossom dead.  
Too courteous are you, fair Lord Lancelot.  
I pray you, use some rough discourtesy  
To blunt or break her passion.'

Lancelot said,  
'That were against me: what I can I will;  
And there that day remain'd, and toward even

Sent for his shield : full meekly rose the maid,  
Stript off the case, and gave the naked shield ;  
Then, when she heard his horse upon the stones,  
Unclasping flung the casement back, and look'd  
Down on his helm, from which her sleeve had gone.  
And Lancelot knew the little clinking sound ;  
And she by tact of love was well aware  
That Lancelot knew that she was looking at him.  
And yet he glanced not up, nor waved his hand,  
Nor bad farewell, but sadly rode away.  
This was the one discourtesy that he used.

So in her tower alone the maiden sat :  
His very shield was gone ; only the case,  
Her own poor work, her empty labor, left.  
But still she heard him, still his picture form'd  
And grew between her and the pictured wall.  
Then came her father, saying in low tones  
' Hays comfort,' whom she greeted quietly.  
Then came her brethren saying, ' Peace to thee  
Sweet sister,' whom she answer'd with all calm.  
But when they left her to herself again,  
Death, like a friend's voice from a distant field  
Approaching thro' the darkness, call'd ; the owls  
Wailing had power upon her, and she mixt  
Her fancies with the sallow-rifted glooms  
Of evening, and the moanings of the wind.

And in those days she made a little song,  
And call'd her song ' The Song of Love and Death,'  
And sang it : sweetly could she make and sing.

" Sweet is true love, tho' given in vain, in vain ;  
And sweet is death who puts an end to pain :  
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

“ Love, art thou sweet ? then bitter death must be :  
Love, thou art bitter ; sweet is death to me.  
O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die.

“ Sweet Love, that seems not made to fade away,  
Sweet death, that seems to make us loveless clay,  
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

“ I fain would follow love, if that could be ;  
I needs must follow death, who calls for me ;  
Call and I follow, I follow ! let me die.”

High with the last line scaled her voice, and this,  
All in a fiery dawning wild with wind  
That shook her tower, the brothers heard, and thought  
With shuddering ‘ Hark the Phantom of the house  
That ever shrieks before a death,’ and call’d  
The father, and all three in hurry and fear  
Ran to her, and lo ! the bloodred light of dawn  
Flared on her face, she shrilling ‘ Let me die !’

As when we dwell upon a word we know  
Repeating, till the word we know so well  
Becomes a wonder and we know not why,  
So dwelt the father on her face and thought  
‘ Is this Elaine ?’ till back the maiden fell,  
Then gave a languid hand to each, and lay,  
Speaking a still good-morrow with her eyes.  
At last she said ‘ Sweet brothers, yesternight  
I seem’d a curious little maid again,  
As happy as when we dwelt among the woods,  
And when you used to take me with the flood  
Up the great river in the boatman’s boat.



Only you would not pass beyond the cape  
That has the poplar on it : there you fixt  
Your limit, oft returning with the tide.  
And yet I cried because you would not pass  
Beyond it, and far up the shining flood  
Until we found the palace of the king.  
And yet you would not ; but this night I dream'd  
That I was all alone upon the flood,  
And then I said " Now shall I have my will : "  
And there I woke, but still the wish remain'd.  
So let me hence that I may pass at last  
Beyond the poplar and far up the flood,  
Until I find the palace of the king.  
There will I enter in among them all,  
And no man there will dare to mock at me ;  
But there the fine Gawain will wonder at me,  
And there the great Sir Lancelot muse at me ;  
Gawain, who bad a thousand farewells to me,  
Lancelot, who coldly went nor bad me one :  
And there the King will know me and my love,  
And there the Queen herself will pity me,  
And all the gentle court will welcome me,  
And after my long voyage I shall rest ! '

' Peace,' said her father, ' O my child, you seem  
Light-headed, for what force is yours to go,  
So far, being sick ? and wherefore would you look  
On this proud fellow again, who scorns us all ? '

Then the rough Torre began to heave and move,  
And bluster into stormy sobs and say,  
' I never loved him : an I meet with him,  
I care not howsoever great he be,  
Then will I strike at him and strike him down,



Give me good fortune, I will strike him dead,  
For this discomfort he hath done the house.'

To which the gentle sister made reply,  
'Fret not yourself, dear brother, nor be wroth,  
Seeing it is no more Sir Lancelot's fault  
Not to love me, than it is mine to love  
Him of all men who seems to me the highest.'

'Highest?' the Father answer'd, echoing 'highest.'  
(He meant to break the passion in her) 'nay,  
Daughter, I know not what you call the highest ;  
But this I know, for all the people know it,  
He loves the Queen, and in an open shame :  
And she returns his love in open shame.  
If this be high, what is it to be low ?'

Then spake the lily maid of Astolat ;  
'Sweet father, all too faint and sick am I  
For anger : these are slanders : never yet  
Was noble man but made ignoble talk.  
He makes no friend who never made a foe.  
But now it is my glory to have loved  
One peerless, without stain : so let me pass,  
My father, howsoe'er I seem to you,  
Not all unhappy, having loved God's best  
And greatest, tho' my love had no return :  
Yet, seeing you desire your child to live,  
Thanks, but you work against your own desire ;  
For if I could believe the things you say  
I should but die the sooner ; wherefore cease,  
Sweet father, and bid call the ghostly man  
Hither, and let me shrive me clean, and die.'

So when the ghostly man had come and gone,  
She with a face, bright as for sin forgiven,  
Besought Lavaine to write as she devised  
A letter, word for word ; and when he ask'd  
' Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear lord ?  
Then will I bear it gladly ;' she replied,  
' For Lancelot and the Queen and all the world,  
But I myself must bear it.' Then he wrote  
The letter she devised ; which being writ  
And folded, ' O sweet father, tender and true,  
Deny me not,' she said — ' you never yet  
Denied my fancies — this, however strange,  
My latest : lay the letter in my hand  
A little ere I die, and close the hand  
Upon it ; I shall guard it even in death.  
And when the heat is gone from out my heart,  
Then take the little bed on which I died  
For Lancelot's love, and deck it like the Queen's  
For richness, and me also like the Queen  
In all I have of rich, and lay me on it.  
And let there be prepared a chariot-bier  
To take me to the river, and a barge  
Be ready on the river, clothed in black.  
I go in state to court, to meet the Queen.  
There surely I shall speak for mine own self,  
And none of you can speak for me so well.  
And therefore let our dumb old man alone  
Go with me, he can steer and row, and he  
Will guide me to that palace, to the doors.'

She ceased : her father promised ; whereupon  
She grew so cheerful that they deem'd her death  
Was rather in the fantasy than the blood.  
But ten slow mornings past, and on the eleventh

Her father laid the letter in her hand,  
And closed the hand upon it, and she died.  
So that day there was dole in Astolat.

But when the next sun brake from underground,  
Then, those two brethren slowly with bent brows  
Accompanying, the sad chariot-bier  
Past like a shadow thro' the field, that shone  
Full-summer, to that stream whereon the barge,  
Pall'd all its length in blackest samite, lay.  
There sat the lifelong creature of the house,  
Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck,  
Winking his eyes, and twisted all his face.  
So those two brethren from the chariot took  
And on the black decks laid her in her bed,  
Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung  
The silken case with braided blazonings,  
And kiss'd her quiet brows,\* and saying to her  
'Sister, farewell forever,' and again  
'Farewell, sweet sister,' parted all in tears.  
Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the dead  
Steer'd by the dumb went upward with the flood —  
In her right hand the lily, in her left  
The letter — all her bright hair streaming down —  
And all the coverlid was cloth of gold  
Drawn to her waist, and she herself in white  
All but her face, and that clear-featured face  
Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead  
But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she smiled.

That day Sir Lancelot at the palace craved  
Audience of Guinevere, to give at last  
The price of half a realm, his costly gift,  
Hard-won and hardly won with bruise and blow,

With deaths of others, and almost his own,  
The nine-years-fought-for diamonds : for he saw  
One of her house, and sent him to the Queen  
Bearing his wish, whereto the Queen agreed  
With such and so unmoved a majesty  
She might have seem'd her statue, but that he,  
Low-drooping till he wellnigh kiss'd her feet  
For loyal awe, saw with a sidelong eye  
The shadow of a piece of pointed lace,  
In the Queen's shadow, vibrate on the walls,  
And parted, laughing in his courtly heart.

All in an oriel on the summer side,  
Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward the stream,  
They met, and Lancelot kneeling utter'd, ' Queen,  
Lady, my liege, in whom I have my joy,  
Take, what I had not won except for you,  
These jewels, and make me happy, making them  
An armlet for the roundest arm on earth,  
Or necklace for a neck to which the swan's  
Is tawnier than her cygnet's : these are words :  
Your beauty is your beauty, and I sin  
In speaking, yet O grant my worship of it  
Words, as we grant grief tears. Such sin in words  
Perchance, we both can pardon : but, my Queen,  
I hear of rumors flying thro' your court.  
Our bond, is not the bond of man and wife,  
Should have in it an absoluter trust  
To make up that defect : let rumors be :  
When did not rumors fly ? these, as I trust  
That you trust me in your own nobleness,  
I may not well believe that you believe.'

While thus he spoke, half turn'd away, the Queen

Brake from the vast oriel-embowering vine  
Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast them off,  
Till all the place whereon she stood was green ;  
Then, when he ceased, in one cold passive hand  
Received at once and laid aside the gems  
There on a table near her, and replied.

‘It may be, I am quicker of belief  
Than you believe me, Lancelot of the Lake.  
Our bond is not the bond of man and wife.  
This good is in it, whatsoe’er of ill,  
It can be broken easier. I for you  
This many a year have done despite and wrong  
To one whom ever in my heart of hearts  
I did acknowledge nobler. What are these ?  
Diamonds for me ! they had been thrice their worth  
Being your gift, had you not lost your own.  
To loyal hearts the value of all gifts  
Must vary as the giver’s. Not for me !  
For her ! for your new fancy. Only this  
Grant me, I pray you : have your joys apart.  
I doubt not that however changed, you keep  
So much of what is graceful : and myself  
Would shun to break those bounds of courtesy  
In which as Arthur’s queen I move and rule :  
So cannot speak my mind. An end to this !  
A strange one ! yet I take it with Amen.  
So pray you, add my diamonds to her pearls ;  
Deck her with these ; tell her, she shines me down :  
An armlet for an arm to which the Queen’s  
Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck  
O as much fairer — as a faith once fair  
Was richer than these diamonds — hers not mine —  
Nay, by the mother of our Lord himself,

Or hers or mine, mine now to work my will —  
She shall not have them.'

Saying which she seized,  
And, thro' the casement standing wide for heat,  
Flung them, and down they flash'd, and smote the  
stream.

Then from the smitten surface flash'd, as it were,  
Diamonds to meet them, and they past away.  
Then while Sir Lancelot leant, in half disgust  
At love, life, all things, on the window ledge,  
Close underneath his eyes, and right across  
Where these had fallen, slowly past the barge  
Whereon the lily maid of Astolat  
Lay smiling, like a star in blackest night.

But the wild Queen, who saw not, burst away  
To weep and wail in secret ; and the barge  
On to the palace-doorway sliding, paused.  
There two stood arm'd, and kept the door ; to whom,  
All up the marble stair, tier over tier,  
Were added mouths that gaped, and eyes that ask'd  
'What is it ?' but that oarsman's haggard face,  
As hard and still as is the face that men  
Shape to their fancy's eye from broken rocks  
On some cliff-side, appall'd them, and they said,  
'He is enchanted, cannot speak — and she,  
Look how she sleeps — the Fairy Queen, so fair !  
Yea, but how pale ! what are they ? flesh and blood ?  
Or come to take the King to fairy land ?  
For some do hold our Arthur cannot die,  
But that he passes into fairy land.'

While thus they babbled of the King, the King

Came girt with knights : then turn'd the tongueless man  
From the half-face to the full eye, and rose  
And pointed to the damsel, and the doors.  
So Arthur bad the meek Sir Percivale  
And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the maid ;  
And reverently they bore her into hall.  
Then came the fine Gawain and wonder'd at her,  
And Lancelot later came and mused at her,  
At last the Queen herself and pitied her :  
But Arthur spied the letter in her hand,  
Stoopt, took, brake seal, and read it ; this was all.

‘ Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the Lake,  
I, sometime call'd the maid of Astolat,  
Come, for you left me taking no farewell,  
Hither, to take my last farewell of you.  
I loved you, and my love had no return,  
And therefore my true love has been my death.  
And therefore to our lady Guinevere,  
And to all other ladies, I make moan.  
Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.  
Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lancelot,  
As thou art a knight peerless.’

Thus he read,  
And ever in the reading, lords and dames  
Wept, looking often from his face who read  
To hers which lay so silent, and at times,  
So touch'd were they, half-thinking that her lips,  
Who had devised the letter, moved again.

Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to them all ;  
‘ My lord liege Arthur, and all ye that hear,  
Know that for this most gentle maiden's death

Right heavy am I ; for good she was and true,  
But loved me with a love beyond all love  
In women, whomsoever I have known.  
Yet to be loved makes not to love again ;  
Not at my years, however it hold in youth.  
I swear by truth and knighthood that I gave  
No cause, not willingly, for such a love :  
To this I call my friends in testimony,  
Her brethren, and her father, who himself  
Besought me to be plain and blunt, and use,  
To break her passion, some discourtesy  
Against my nature : what I could, I did.  
I left her and I bad her no farewell.  
Tho', had I dreamt the damsel would have died,  
I might have put my wits to some rough use,  
And help'd her from herself.'

Then said the Queen  
(Sea was her wrath, yet working after storm)  
' You might at least have done her so much grace,  
Fair lord, as would have help'd her from her death.'  
He raised his head, their eyes met and hers fell,  
He adding,

' Queen, she would not be content  
Save that I wedded her, which could not be.  
Then might she follow me thro' the world, she ask'd ;  
It could not be. I told her that her love  
Was but the flash of youth, would darken down  
To rise hereafter in a stiller flame  
Toward one more worthy of her — then would I,  
More specially were he, she wedded, poor,  
Estate them with large land and territory  
In mine own realm beyond the narrow seas,  
To keep them in all joyance : more than this  
I could not ; this she would not, and she died.'



He pausing, Arthur answer'd, 'O my knight,  
It will be to your worship, as my knight,  
And mine, as head of all our Table Round,  
To see that she be buried worshipfully.'

So toward that shrine which then in all the realm  
Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly went  
The marshall'd order of their Table Round,  
And Lancelot sad beyond his wont, to see  
The maiden buried, not as one unknown,  
Nor meanly, but with gorgeous obsequies,  
And mass, and rolling music, like a Queen.  
And when the knights had laid her comely head  
Low in the dust of half-forgotten kings,  
Then Arthur spake among them, 'Let her tomb  
Be costly, and her image thereupon.  
And let the shield of Lancelot at her feet  
Be carven, and her lily in her hand.  
And let the story of her dolorous voyage  
For all true hearts be blazon'd on her tomb  
In letters gold and azure !' which was wrought  
Thereafter ; but when now the lords and dames  
And people, from the high door streaming, brake  
Disorderly, as homeward each, the Queen,  
Who mark'd Sir Lancelot where he moved apart,  
Drew near, and sigh'd in passing ' Lancelot,  
Forgive me ; mine was jealousy in love.'  
He answer'd with his eyes upon the ground,  
' That is love's curse ; pass on, my Queen, forgiven.'  
But Arthur who beheld his cloudy brows  
Approach'd him, and with full affection flung  
One arm about his neck, and spake and said.

' Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in whom I have

Most joy and most affiance, for I know  
What thou hast been in battle by my side,  
And many a time have watch'd thee at the tilt  
Strike down the lusty and long-practised knight,  
And let the younger and unskill'd go by  
To win his honor and to make his name,  
And loved thy courtesies and thee, a man  
Made to be loved ; — but now I would to God,  
For the wild people say wild things of thee,  
Thou could'st have loved this maiden, shaped, it seems,  
By God for thee alone, and from her face,  
If one may judge the living by the dead,  
Delicately pure and marvellously fair,  
Who might have brought thee, now a lonely man  
Wifeless and heirless, noble issue, sons  
Born to the glory of thy name and fame,  
My knight, the great Sir Lancelot of the Lake.'

Then answer'd Lancelot, ' Fair she was, my King,  
Pure, as you ever wish your knights to be.  
To doubt her fairness were to want an eye,  
To doubt her pureness were to want a heart, —  
Yea, to be loved, if what is worthy love  
Could bind him, but free love will not be bound.'

' Free love, so bound, were freëst,' said the King.  
' Let love be free ; free love is for the best :  
And, after heaven, on our dull side of death,  
What should be best, if not so pure a love  
Clothed in so pure a loveliness ? yet thee  
She fail'd to bind, tho' being, as I think,  
Unbound as yet, and gentle, as I know.'

And Lancelot answer'd nothing, but he went,

And at the inrunning of a little brook  
Sat by the river in a cove, and watch'd  
The high reed wave, and lifted up his eyes  
And saw the barge that brought her moving down,  
Far-off, a blot upon the stream, and said  
Low in himself ' Ah simple heart and sweet,  
You loved me, damsel, surely with a love  
Far tenderer than my Queen's. Pray for thy soul ?  
Ay, that will I. Farewell too — now at last —  
Farewell, fair lily. " Jealousy in love ?"  
Not rather dead love's harsh heir, jealous pride ?  
Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of love,  
May not your crescent fear for name and fame  
Speak, as it waxes, of a love that wanes ?  
Why did the King dwell on my name to me ?  
Mine own name shames me, seeming a reproach,  
Lancelot, whom the Lady of the lake  
Stole from his mother — as the story runs —  
She chanted snatches of mysterious song  
Heard on the winding waters, eve and morn  
She kiss'd me saying thou art fair, my child,  
As a king's son, and often in her arms  
She bare me, pacing on the dusky mere.  
Would she had drown'd me in it, where'er it be !  
For what am I ? what profits me my name  
Of greatest knight ? I fought for it, and have it :  
Pleasure to have it, none ; to lose it, pain ;  
Now grown a part of me : but what use in it ?  
To make men worse by making my sin known ?  
Or sin seem less, the sinner seeming great ?  
Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a man  
Not after Arthur's heart ! I needs must break  
These bonds that so defame me : not without  
She wills it : would I, if she will'd it ? nay,

Who knows? but if I would not, then may God,  
I pray him, send a sudden Angel down  
To seize me by the hair and bear me far,  
And fling me deep in that forgotten mere,  
Among the tumbled fragments of the hills.'

So groan'd Sir Lancelot in remorseful pain,  
Not knowing he should die a holy man.





## GUINEVERE .

QUEEN GUINEVERE had fled the court, and sat  
There in the holy house at Almesbury  
Weeping, none with her save a little maid,  
A novice : one low light betwixt them burn'd  
Blurr'd by the creeping mist, for all abroad,  
Beneath a moon unseen albeit at full,  
The white mist, like a face-cloth to the face,  
Clung to the dead earth, and the land was still.

For hither had she fled, her cause of flight  
Sir Modred ; he the nearest to the King,  
His nephew, ever like a subtle beast  
Lay couchant with his eyes upon the throne,  
Ready to spring, waiting a chance : for this,  
He chill'd the popular praises of the King  
With silent smiles of slow disparagement ;  
And tamper'd with the Lords of the White Horse,  
Heathen, the brood by Hengist left ; and sought  
To make disruption in the Table Round  
Of Arthur, and to splinter it into feuds  
Serving his traitorous end ; and all his aims  
Were sharpen'd by strong hate for Lancelot.

For thus it chanced one morn when all the court,  
Green-suited, but with plumes that mock'd the May,  
Had been, their wont, a-maying and return'd,  
That Modred still in green, all ear and eye,  
Climb'd to the high top of the garden-wall  
To spy some secret scandal if he might,  
And saw the Queen who sat betwixt her best  
Enid, and lissome Vivien, of her court  
The wiliest and the worst ; and more than this  
He saw not, for Sir Lancelot passing by  
Spied where he couch'd, and as the gardener's hand  
Picks from the colewort a green caterpillar,  
So from the high wall and the flowering grove  
Of grasses Lancelot pluck'd him by the heel,  
And cast him as a worm upon the way ;  
But when he knew the Prince tho' marr'd with dust,  
He, reverencing king's blood in a bad man,  
Made such excuses as he might, and these  
Full knightly without scorn ; for in those days  
No knight of Arthur's noblest dealt in scorn ;  
But, if a man were halt or hunch'd, in him  
By those whom God had made full-limb'd and tall,  
Scorn was allow'd as part of his defect,  
And he was answer'd softly by the King  
And all his Table. So Sir Lancelot help  
To raise the Prince, who rising twice or thrice  
Full sharply smote his knees, and smiled, and went :  
But, ever after, the small violence done  
Rankled in him and ruffled all his heart,  
As the sharp wind that ruffles all day long  
A little bitter pool about a stone  
On the bare coast.

But when Sir Lancelot told  
This matter to the Queen, at first she laugh'd

Lightly, to think of Modred's dusty fall,  
Then shudder'd, as the village wife who cries  
' I shudder, some one steps across my grave ;'  
Then laugh'd again, but faintlier, for indeed  
She half-foresaw that he, the subtle beast,  
Would track her guilt until he found, and hers  
Would be forevermore a name of scorn.  
Henceforward rarely could she front in Hall,  
Or elsewhere, Modred's narrow foxy face,  
Heart-hiding smile, and gray persistent eye :  
Henceforward too, the Powers that tend the soul,  
To help it from the death that cannot die,  
And save it even in extremes, began  
To vex and plague her. Many a time for hours,  
Beside the placid breathings of the King,  
In the dead night, grim faces came and went  
Before her, or a vague spiritual fear —  
Like to some doubtful noise of creaking doors,  
Heard by the watcher in a haunted house,  
That keeps the rust of murder on the walls —  
Held her awake : or if she slept, she dream'd  
An awful dream ; for then she seem'd to stand  
On some vast plain before a setting sun,  
And from the sun there swiftly made at her  
A ghastly something, and its shadow flew  
Before it, till it touch'd her, and she turn'd —  
When lo ! her own, that broadening from her feet,  
And blackening, swallow'd all the land, and in it  
Far cities burnt, and with a cry she woke.  
And all this trouble did not pass but grew ;  
Till ev'n the clear face of the guileless King,  
And trustful courtesies of household life,  
Became her bane ; and at the last she said,  
' O Lancelot, get thee hence to thine own land,

For if thou tarry we shall meet again,  
And if we meet again, some evil chance  
Will make the smouldering scandal break and blaze  
Before the people, and our lord the King.  
And Lancelot ever promised, but remain'd,  
And still they met and met. Again she said,  
'O Lancelot, if thou love me get thee hence.'  
And then they were agreed upon a night  
(When the good King should not be there) to meet  
And part forever. Passion-pale they met  
And greeted: hands in hands, and eye to eye,  
Low on the border of her couch they sat  
Stammering and staring: it was their last hour,  
A madness of farewells. And Modred brought  
His creatures to the basement of the tower  
For testimony; and crying with full voice  
'Traitor, come out, ye are trapt at last,' aroused  
Lancelot, who rushing outward lionlike  
Leapt on him, and hurl'd him headlong, and he fell  
Stunn'd, and his creatures took and bare him off  
And all was still: then she, 'the end is come  
And I am shamed forever;' and he said  
'Mine be the shame; mine was the sin: but rise,  
And fly to my strong castle overseas:  
There will I hide thee, till my life shall end,  
There hold thee with my life against the world.'  
She answer'd 'Lancelot, wilt thou hold me so?  
Nay friend, for we have taken our farewells.  
Would God, that thou could'st hide me from myself!  
Mine is the shame, for I was wife, and thou  
Unwedded: yet rise now, and let us fly,  
For I will draw me into sanctuary,  
And bide my doom.' So Lancelot got her horse,  
Set her thereon, and mounted on his own,



And then they rode to the divided way,  
There kiss'd, and parted weeping : for he past,  
' Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen,  
Back to his land ; but she to Almesbury  
Fled all night long by glimmering waste and weald,  
And heard the Spirits of the waste and weald  
Moan as she fled, or thought she heard them moan :  
And in herself she moan'd ' too late, too late ! '  
Till in the cold wind that foreruns the morn,  
A blot in heaven, the Raven, flying high,  
Croak'd, and she thought ' he spies a field of death ;  
For now the heathen of the Northern Sea,  
Lured by the crimes and frailties of the court,  
Begin to slay the folk, and spoil the land.'

And when she came to Almesbury she spake  
There to the nuns, and said, ' mine enemies  
Pursue me, but, O peaceful Sisterhood,  
Receive, and yield me sanctuary, nor ask  
Her name, to whom ye yield it, till her time  
To tell you' and her beauty, grace and power,  
Wrought as a charm upon them, and they spared  
To ask it.

So the stately Queen abode  
For many a week, unknown, among the nuns ;  
Nor with them mix'd, nor told her name, nor sought,  
Wrapt in her grief, for housel or for shrift,  
But communed only with the little maid,  
Who pleased her with a babbling heedlessness  
Which often lured her from herself ; but now,  
This night, a rumor wildly blown about  
Came, that Sir Modred had usurp'd the realm,  
And leagued him with the heathen, while the King  
Was waging war on Lancelot : then she thought,

‘With what a hate the people and the King  
Must hate me,’ and bow’d down upon her hands  
Silent, until the little maid, who brook’d  
No silence, brake it, uttering ‘late ! so late !  
What hour, I wonder, now ?’ and when she drew  
No answer, by and by began to hum  
An air the nuns had taught her ; ‘late, so late !’  
Which when she heard, the Queen look’d up, and said,  
‘O maiden, if indeed you list to sing,  
Sing, and unbind my heart that I may weep.’  
Whereat full willingly sang the little maid.

“Late, late, so late ! and dark the night and chill !  
Late, late, so late ! but we can enter still.  
Too late, too late ! ye cannot enter now.

“No light had we : for that we do repent ;  
And learning this, the bridegroom will relent.  
Too late, too late ! ye cannot enter now.

“No light : so late ! and dark and chill the night !  
O let us in, that we may find the light !  
Too late, too late ! ye cannot enter now.

“Have we not heard the bridegroom is so sweet ?  
O let us in, tho’ late, to kiss his feet !  
No, no, too late ! ye cannot enter now.”

So sang the novice, while full passionately,  
Her head upon her hands, remembering  
Her thought when first she came, wept the sad Queen.  
Then said the little novice prattling to her.

‘O pray you, noble lady, weep no more ;  
But let my words, the words of one so small,

Who knowing nothing knows but to obey,  
And if I do not there is penance given —  
Comfort your sorrows ; for they do not flow  
From evil done ; right sure am I of that,  
Who see your tender grace and stateliness.  
But weigh your sorrows with our lord the King's,  
And weighing find them less ; for gone is he  
To wage grim war against Sir Lancelot there,  
Round that strong castle where he holds the Queen ;  
And Modred whom he left in charge of all,  
The traitor — Ah sweet lady, the King's grief  
For his own self, and his own Queen, and realm,  
Must needs be thrice as great as any of ours.  
For me, I thank the saints, I am not great.  
For if there ever come a grief to me  
I cry my cry in silence, and have done :  
None knows it, and my tears have brought me good :  
But even were the griefs of little ones  
As great as those of great ones, yet this grief  
Is added to the griefs the great must bear,  
That howsoever much they may desire  
Silence, they cannot weep behind a cloud :  
As even here they talk at Almesbury  
About the good King and his wicked Queen,  
And were I such a King with such a Queen,  
Well might I wish to veil her wickedness,  
But were I such a King, it could not be.'

Then to her own sad heart mutter'd the Queen.  
' Will the child kill me with her innocent talk ?'  
But openly she answer'd ' must not I,  
If this false traitor have displaced his lord,  
Grieve with the common grief of all the realm ?'

‘Yea,’ said the maid, ‘this is all woman’s grief,  
That *she* is woman, whose disloyal life  
Hath wrought confusion in the Table Round  
Which good King Arthur founded, years ago,  
With signs and miracles and wonders, there  
At Camelot, ere the coming of the Queen.’

Then thought the Queen within herself again ;  
‘Will the child kill me with her foolish prate ?’  
But openly she spake and said to her ;  
‘O little maid, shut in by nunnery walls,  
What canst thou know of Kings and Tables Round,  
Or what of signs and wonders, but the signs  
And simple miracles of thy nunnery ?’

To whom the little novice garrulously.  
‘Yea, but I know : the land was full of signs  
And wonders ere the coming of the Queen.  
So said my father, and himself was knight  
Of the great Table — at the founding of it ;  
And rode thereto from Lyonesse, and he said  
That as he rode, an hour or maybe twain  
After the sunset, down the coast, he heard  
Strange music, and he paused and turning — there,  
All down the lonely coast of Lyonesse,  
Each with a beacon-star upon his head,  
And with a wild sea-light about his feet,  
He saw them — headland after headland flame  
Far on into the rich heart of the west :  
And in the light the white mermaiden swam,  
And strong man-breasted things stood from the sea,  
And sent a deep sea-voice thro’ all the land,  
To which the little elves of chasm and cleft  
Made answer, sounding like a distant horn.

So said my father — yea, and furthermore,  
Next morning, while he past the dim-lit woods,  
Himself beheld three spirits mad with joy  
Come dashing down on a tall wayside flower,  
That shook beneath them, as the thistle shakes  
When three gray linnets wrangle for the seed :  
And still at evenings on before his horse  
The flickering fairy-circle wheel'd and broke  
Flying, and link'd again, and wheel'd and broke  
Flying, for all the land was full of life.  
And when at last he came to Camelot,  
A wreath of airy dancers hand-in-hand  
Swung round the lighted lantern of the hall ;  
And in the hall itself was such a feast  
As never man had dream'd ; for every knight  
Had whatsoever meat he long'd for served  
By hands unseen ; and even as he said  
Down in the cellars merry bloated things  
Shoulder'd the spigot, straddling on the butts  
While the wine ran : so glad were spirits and men  
Before the coming of the sinful Queen.'

Then spake the Queen and somewhat bitterly.  
'Were they so glad ? ill prophets were they all,  
Spirits and men : could none of them foresee,  
Not even thy wise father with his signs  
And wonders, what has fall'n upon the realm ?'

To whom the novice garrulously again.  
'Yea, one, a bard ; of whom my father said,  
Full many a noble war-song had he sung,  
Ev'n in the presence of an enemy's fleet,  
Between the steep cliff and the coming wave ;  
And many a mystic lay of life and death

Had chanted on the smoky mountain-tops,  
When round him bent the spirits of the hills  
With all their dewy hair blown back like flame :  
So said my father — and that night the bard  
Sang Arthur's glorious wars, and sang the King  
As well-nigh more than man, and rail'd at those  
Who call'd him the false son of Gorloïs :  
For there was no man knew from whence he came ;  
But after tempest, when the long wave broke  
All down the thundering shores of Bude and Bos,  
There came a day as still as heaven, and then  
They found a naked child upon the sands  
Of dark Dundagil by the Cornish sea ;  
And that was Arthur ; and they foster'd him  
Till he by miracle was approven king :  
And that his grave should be a mystery  
From all men, like his birth ; and could he find  
A woman in her womanhood as great  
As he was in his manhood, then, he sang,  
The twain together well might change the world.  
But even in the middle of his song  
He falter'd, and his hand fell from the harp,  
And pale he turn'd, and reel'd, and would have fall'n,  
But that they stay'd him up ; nor would he tell  
His vision ; but what doubt that he foresaw  
This evil work of Lancelot and the Queen ?'

Then thought the Queen 'lo ! they have set her on,  
Our simple-seeming Abbess and her nuns,  
'To play upon me,' and bow'd her head nor spake.  
Whereat the novice crying, with clasp'd hands,  
Shame on her own garrulity garrulously,  
Said the good nuns would check her gadding tongue  
Full often, 'and, sweet lady, if I seem

To vex an ear too sad to listen to me,  
Unmannerly, with prattling and the tales  
Which my good father told me, check me too :  
Nor let me shame my father's memory, one  
Of noblest manners, tho' himself would say  
Sir Lancelot had the noblest ; and he died,  
Kill'd in a tilt, come next, five summers back,  
And left me ; but of others who remain,  
And of the two first-famed for courtesy —  
And pray you check me if I ask amiss —  
But pray you, which had noblest, while you moved  
Among them, Lancelot or our lord the King ?'

Then the pale Queen look'd up and answer'd her.  
' Sir Lancelot, as became a noble knight,  
Was gracious to all ladies, and the same  
In open battle or the tilting-field  
Forbore his own advantage, and the King  
In open battle or the tilting-field  
Forbore his own advantage, and these two  
Were the most nobly-manner'd men of all ;  
For manners are not idle, but the fruit  
Of loyal nature, and of noble mind.'

' Yea,' said the maid, ' be manners such fair fruit ?  
Then Lancelot's needs must be a thousand-fold  
Less noble, being, as all rumor runs,  
The most disloyal friend in all the world.'

To which a mournful answer made the Queen.  
' O closed about by narrowing nunnery-walls,  
What knowest thou of the world, and all its lights  
And shadows, all the wealth and all the woe ?  
If ever Lancelot, that most noble knight,



Were for one hour less noble than himself,  
Pray for him that he scape the doom of fire,  
And weep for her, who drew him to his doom.'

'Yea,' said the little novice, 'I pray for both ;  
But I should all as soon believe that his,  
Sir Lancelot's, were as noble as the King's,  
As I could think, sweet lady, yours would be  
Such as they are, were you the sinful Queen.'

So she, like many another babbler, hurt  
Whom she would soothe, and harm'd where she would  
heal ;

For here a sudden flush of wrathful heat  
Fired all the pale face of the Queen, who cried,  
'Such as thou art be never maiden more  
Forever ! thou their tool, set on to plague  
And play upon, and harry me, petty spy  
And traitress.' When that storm of anger brake  
From Guinevere, aghast the maiden rose,  
White as her veil, and stood before the Queen  
As tremulously as foam upon the beach  
Stands in a wind, ready to break and fly,  
And when the Queen had added 'get thee hence'  
Fled frightened. Then that other left alone  
Sigh'd, and began to gather heart again,  
Saying in herself 'the simple, fearful child  
Meant nothing, but my own too-fearful guilt  
Simpler than any child, betrays itself.  
But help me, heaven, for surely I repent.  
For what is true repentance but in thought —  
Not ev'n in inmost thought to think again  
The sins that made the past so pleasant to us :  
And I have sworn never to see him more,  
To see him more.'



And ev'n in saying this,  
Her memory from old habit of the mind  
Went slipping back upon the golden days  
In which she saw him first, when Lancelot came,  
Reputed the best knight and goodliest man,  
Ambassador, to lead her to his lord  
Arthur, and led her forth, and far ahead  
Of his and her retinue moving, they,  
Rapt in sweet talk or lively, all on love  
And sport and tilts and pleasure, (for the time  
Was maytime, and as yet no sin was dream'd,)  
Rode under groves that look'd a paradise  
Of blossom, over sheets of hyacinth  
That seem'd the heavens upbreking thro' the earth,  
And on from hill to hill, and every day  
Beheld at noon in some delicious dale  
The silk pavilions of King Arthur raised  
For brief repast or afternoon repose  
By couriers gone before ; and on again,  
Till yet once more ere set of sun they saw  
The Dragon of the great Pendragonship,  
That crown'd the state pavilion of the King,  
Blaze by the rushing brook or silent well.

But when the Queen immersed in such a trance,  
And moving thro' the past unconsciously,  
Came to that point, when first she saw the King  
Ride toward her from the city, sigh'd to find  
Her journey done, glanced at him, thought him cold,  
High, self-contain'd, and passionless, not like him,  
'Not like my Lancelot' — while she brooded thus  
And grew half-guilty in her thoughts again,  
There rode an armed warrior to the doors.  
A murmuring whisper thro' the nunnery ran,

Then on a sudden a cry, 'the King.' She sat  
Stiff-stricken, listening ; but when armed feet  
Thro' the long gallery from the outer doors  
Rang coming, prone from off her seat she fell,  
And grovell'd with her face against the floor :  
There with her milkwhite arms and shadowy hair  
She made her face a darkness from the King :  
And in the darkness heard his armed feet  
Pause by her ; then came silence, then a voice,  
Monotonous and hollow like a Ghost's  
Denouncing judgment, but tho' changed the King's.

' Liest thou here so low, the child of one  
I honor'd, happy, dead before thy shame ?  
Well is it that no child is born of thee.  
The children born of thee are sword and fire,  
Red ruin, and the breaking up of laws,  
The craft of kindred and the Godless hosts  
Of heathen swarming o'er the Northern Sea.  
Whom I, while yet Sir Lancelot, my right arm,  
The mightiest of my knights, abode with me,  
Have everywhere about this land of Christ  
In twelve great battles ruining overthrown.  
And knowest thou now from whence I come — from him,  
From waging bitter war with him : and he,  
That did not shun to smite me in worse way,  
Had yet that grace of courtesy in him left,  
He spared to lift his hand against the King  
Who made him knight : but many a knight was slain ;  
And many more, and all his kith and kin  
Clave to him, and abode in his own land.  
And many more when Modred raised revolt,  
Forgetful of their troth and fealty, clave  
To Modred, and a remnant stays with me.

And of this remnant will I leave a part,  
True men who love me still, for whom I live,  
To guard thee in the wild hour coming on,  
Lest but a hair of this low head be harm'd.  
Fear not : thou shalt be guarded till my death.  
Howbeit I know, if ancient prophecies  
Have err'd not, that I march to meet my doom.  
Thou hast not made my life so sweet to me,  
That I the King should greatly care to live ;  
For thou hast spoilt the purpose of my life.  
Bear with me for the last time while I show,  
Ev'n for thy sake, the sin which thou hast sinn'd.  
For when the Roman left us, and their law  
Relax'd its hold upon us, and the ways  
Were fill'd with rapine, here and there a deed  
Of prowess done redress'd a random wrong.  
But I was first of all the kings who drew  
The knighthood-errant of this realm and all  
The realms together under me, their Head,  
In that fair order of my Table Round,  
A glorious company, the flower of men,  
To serve as model for the mighty world,  
And be the fair beginning of a time.  
I made them lay their hands in mine and swear  
To reverence the King, as if he were  
Their conscience, and their conscience as their King,  
To break the heathen and uphold the Christ,  
To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,  
To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,  
To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,  
To love one maiden only, cleave to her,  
And worship her by years of noble deeds,  
Until they won her ; for indeed I knew  
Of no more subtle master under heaven

Than is the maiden passion for a maid,  
Not only to keep down the base in man,  
But teach high thought, and amiable words  
And courtliness, and the desire of fame,  
And love of truth, and all that makes a man.  
And all this throve until I wedded thee !  
Believing "lo mine helpmate, one to feel  
My purpose and rejoicing in my joy."  
Then came thy shameful sin with Lancelot ;  
Then came the sin of Tristram and Isolt ;  
Then others, following these my mightiest knights,  
And drawing foul ensample from fair names,  
Sinn'd also, till the loathsome opposite  
Of all my heart had destined did obtain,  
And all thro' thee ! so that this life of mine  
I guard as God's high gift from scathe and wrong,  
Not greatly care to lose ; but rather think  
How sad it were for Arthur, should he live,  
To sit once more within his lonely hall,  
And miss the wonted number of my knights,  
And miss to hear high talk of noble deeds  
As in the golden days before thy sin.  
For which of us, who might be left, could speak  
Of the pure heart, nor seem to glance at thee ?  
And in thy bowers of Camelot or of Usk  
Thy shadow still would glide from room to room,  
And I should evermore be vext with thee  
In hanging robe or vacant ornament,  
Or ghostly footfall echoing on the stair.  
For think not, tho' thou would'st not love thy lord,  
Thy lord has wholly lost his love for thee.  
I am not made of so slight elements.  
Yet must I leave thee, woman, to thy shame.  
I hold that man the worst of public foes

Who either for his own or children's sake,  
To save his blood from scandal, lets the wife  
Whom he knows false, abide and rule the house :  
For being thro' his cowardice allow'd  
Her station, taken everywhere for pure,  
She like a new disease, unknown to men,  
Creeps, no precaution used, among the crowd,  
Makes wicked lightnings of her eyes, and saps  
The fealty of our friends, and stirs the pulse  
With devil's leaps, and poisons half the young.  
Worst of the worst were that man he that reigns !  
Better the King's waste hearth and aching heart  
Than thou reseated in thy place of light,  
The mockery of my people, and their bane.'

He paused, and in the pause she crept an inch  
Nearer, and laid her hands about his feet.  
Far off a solitary trumpet blew.  
Then waiting by the doors the warhorse neigh'd  
As at a friend's voice, and he spake again.

'Yet think not that I come to urge thy crimes,  
I did not come to curse thee, Guinevere,  
I, whose vast pity almost makes me die  
To see thee, laying there thy golden head,  
My pride in happier summers, at my feet.  
The wrath which forced my thoughts on that fierce law,  
The doom of treason and the flaming death,  
(When first I learnt thee hidden here) is past.  
The pang — which while I weigh'd thy heart with one  
Too wholly true to dream untruth in thee,  
Made my tears burn — is also past, in part.  
And all is past, the sin is sinn'd, and I,  
Lo ! I forgive thee, as Eternal God

Forgives : do thou for thine own soul the rest.  
But how to take last leave of all I loved ?  
O golden hair, with which I used to play  
Not knowing ! O imperial-moulded form,  
And beauty such as never woman wore,  
Until it came a kingdom's curse with thee —  
I cannot touch thy lips, they are not mine,  
But Lancelot's : nay, they never were the King's.  
I cannot take thy hand ; that too is flesh,  
And in the flesh thou hast sinn'd ; and mine own flesh,  
Here looking down on thine polluted, cries  
" I loathe thee : " yet not less, O Guinevere,  
For I was ever virgin save for thee,  
My love thro' flesh hath wrought into my life  
So far, that my doom is, I love thee still.  
Let no man dream but that I love thee still.  
Perchance, and so thou purify thy soul,  
And so thou lean on our fair father Christ,  
Hereafter in that world where all are pure  
We two may meet before high God, and thou  
Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine, and know  
I am thine husband — not a smaller soul,  
Nor Lancelot, nor another. Leave me that,  
I charge thee, my last hope. Now must I hence.  
Thro' the thick night I hear the trumpet blow :  
They summon me their King to lead mine hosts  
Far down to that great battle in the west,  
Where I must strike against my sister's son,  
Leagued with the lords of the White Horse and knights  
Once mine, and strike him dead, and meet myself  
Death, or I know not what mysterious doom.  
And thou remaining here wilt learn the event ;  
But hither shall I never come again,  
Never lie by thy side, see thee no more,  
Farewell ! '

And while she grovell'd at his feet,  
She felt the King's breath wander o'er her neck,  
And, in the darkness o'er her fallen head,  
Perceived the waving of his hands that blest.

' Then, listening till those armed steps were gone,  
Rose the pale Queen, and in her anguish found  
The casement : ' peradventure ' so she thought,  
' If I might see his face, and not be seen.'  
And lo, he sat on horseback at the door !  
And near him the sad nuns with each a light  
Stood, and he gave them charge about the Queen,  
To guard and foster her forevermore.  
And while he spake to these his helm was lower'd,  
To which for crest the golden dragon clung  
Of Britain ; so she did not see the face,  
Which then was as an angel's, but she saw,  
Wet with the mists and smitten by the lights,  
The Dragon of the great Pendragonship  
Blaze, making all the night a steam of fire.  
And even then he turn'd ; and more and more  
The moony vapor rolling round the King,  
Who seem'd the phantom of a Giant in it,  
Enwound him fold by fold, and made him gray  
And grayer, till himself became as mist  
Before her, moving ghostlike to his doom.

Then she stretch'd out her arms and cried aloud  
' Oh Arthur ! ' there her voice brake suddenly,  
Then — as a stream that spouting from a cliff  
Falls in mid air, but gathering at the base  
Re-makes itself, and flashes down the vale —  
Went on in passionate utterance.

' Gone — my lord !



Gone thro' my sin to slay and to be slain !  
And he forgave me, and I could not speak.  
Farewell ? I should have answer'd his farewell.  
His mercy choked me. Gone, my lord the King,  
My own true lord ! how dare I call him mine ?  
The shadow of another cleaves to me,  
And makes me one pollution : he, the King,  
Call'd me polluted : shall I kill myself ?  
What help in that ? I cannot kill my sin,  
If soul be soul ; nor can I kill my shame ;  
No, nor by living can I live it down.  
The days will grow to weeks, the weeks to months,  
The months will add themselves and make the years,  
The years will roll into the centuries,  
And mine will ever be a name of scorn.  
I must not dwell on that defeat of fame.  
Let the world be ; that is but of the world.  
What else ? what hope ? I think there was a hope,  
Except he mock'd me when he spake of hope ;  
His hope he call'd it ; but he never mocks,  
For mockery is the fume of little hearts.  
And blessed be the King, who hath forgiven  
My wickedness to him, and left me hope  
That in mine own heart I can live down sin  
And be his mate hereafter in the heavens  
Before high God. Ah great and gentle lord,  
Who wast, as is the conscience of a saint  
Among his warring senses, to thy knights —  
To whom my false voluptuous pride, that took  
Full easily all impressions from below,  
Would not look up, or half-despised the height  
To which I would not or I could not climb —  
I thought I could not breathe in that fine air  
That pure severity of perfect light —



I wanted warmth and color which I found  
 In Lancelot — now I see thee what thou art,  
 Thou art the highest and most human too,  
 Not Lancelot, nor another. Is their none  
 Will tell the King I love him tho' so late?  
 Now — ere he goes to the great Battle? none:  
 Myself must tell him in that purer life,  
 But now it were too daring. Ah my God,  
 What might I not have made of thy fair world,  
 Had I but loved thy highest creature here?  
 It was my duty to have loved the highest:  
 It surely was my profit had I known:  
 It would have been my pleasure had I seen.  
 We needs must love the highest when we see it,  
 Not Lancelot, nor another.'

Here her hand

Grasp'd, made her veil her eyes: she look'd and saw  
 The novice, weeping, suppliant, and said to her  
 'Yea, little maid, for am *I* not forgiven?'  
 Then glancing up beheld the holy nuns  
 All round her, weeping; and her heart was loosed  
 Within her, and she wept with these and said.

'Ye know me then, that wicked one, who broke  
 The vast design and purpose of the King.  
 O shut me round with narrowing nunnery-walls,  
 Meek maidens, from the voices crying "shame."  
 I must not scorn myself: he loves me still.  
 Let no one dream but that he loves me still.  
 So let me, if you do not shudder at me  
 Nor shun to call me sister, dwell with you;  
 Wear black and white, and be a nun like you;  
 Fast with your fasts, not feasting with your feasts;  
 Grieve with your griefs, not grieving at your joys,

But not rejoicing ; mingle with your rites ;  
Pray and be pray'd for ; lie before your shrines ;  
Do each low office of your holy house ;  
Walk your dim cloister, and distribute dole  
To poor sick people, richer in his eyes  
Who ransom'd us, and haler too than I ;  
And treat their loathsome hurts and heal mine own ;  
And so wear out in almsdeed and in prayer  
The sombre close of that voluptuous day,  
Which wrought the ruin of my lord the King.'

She said : they took her to themselves ; and she  
Still hoping, fearing 'is it yet too late ?'  
Dwelt with them, till in time their Abbess died.  
Then she, for her good deeds and her pure life,  
And for the power of ministration in her,  
And likewise for the high rank she had borne,  
Was chosen Abbess, there, an Abbess, lived  
For three brief years, and there, an Abbess, past  
To where beyond these voices there is peace.





ADDITIONAL POEMS.







## AYLMER'S FIELD.

1793.

DUST are our frames ; and, gilded dust, our pride  
Looks only for a moment whole and sound ;  
Like that long-buried body of the king,  
Found lying with his urns and ornaments,  
Which at a touch of light, an air of heaven.  
Slit into ashes and was found no more.

Here is a story which in rougher shape  
Came from a grizzled cripple, whom I saw  
Sunning himself in a waste field alone —  
Old, and a mine of memories — who had served,  
Long since, a bygone Rector of the place,  
And been himself a part of what he told.

SIR AYLMER AYLMER that almighty man,  
The county God — in whose capacious hall,  
Hung with a hundred shields, the family tree  
Sprang from the midriff of a prostrate king —  
Whose blazing wyvern weathercock'd the spire,  
Stood from his walls and wing'd his entry-gates  
And swang besides on many a windy sign —  
Whose eyes from under a pyramidal head

Saw from his windows nothing save his own —  
What lovelier of his own had he than her,  
His only child, his Edith, whom he loved  
As heiress and not heir regretfully?  
But 'he that marries her marries her name'  
This fiat somewhat soothed himself and wife,  
His wife a faded beauty of the Baths,  
Insipid as the Queen upon a card;  
Her all of thought and bearing hardly more  
Than his own shadow in a sickly sun.

A land of hops and poppy-mingled corn,  
Little about it stirring save a brook!  
A sleepy land where under the same wheel  
The same old rut would deepen year by year;  
Where almost all the village had one name;  
Where Aylmer follow'd Aylmer at the Hall  
And Averill Averill at the Rectory  
Thrice over; so that Rectory and Hall,  
Bound in an immemorial intimacy,  
Were open to each other; tho' to dream  
That Love could bind them closer well had made  
The hoar hair of the Baronet bristle up  
With horror, worse than had he heard his priest  
Preach an inverted scripture, sons of men  
Daughters of God; so sleepy was the land.

And might not Averill, had he will'd it so,  
Somewhere beneath his own low range of roofs,  
Have also set his many-shielded tree?  
There was an Aylmer-Averill marriage once,  
When the red rose was redder than itself,  
And York's white rose as red as Lancaster's,  
With wounded peace which each had prick'd to death.

'Not proven' Averill said, or laughingly  
'Some other race of Averills' — prov'n or no,  
What cared he? what, if other or the same?  
He lean'd not on his fathers but himself.  
But Leolin, his brother, living oft  
With Averill, and a year or two before  
Call'd to the bar, but ever call'd away  
By one low voice to one dear neighborhood,  
Would often, in his walks with Edith, claim  
A distant kinship to the gracious blood  
That shook the heart of Edith hearing him.

Sanguine he was : a but less vivid hue  
Than of that islet in the chestnut-bloom  
Flamed in his cheek ; and eager eyes, that still  
Took joyful note of all things joyful, beam'd,  
Beneath a manelike mass of rolling gold,  
Their best and brightest, when they dwelt on hers,  
Edith, whose pensive beauty, perfect else,  
But subject to the season or the mood,  
Shone like a mystic star between the less  
And greater glory varying to and fro,  
We know not wherefore ; bounteously made,  
And yet so finely, that a troublous touch  
Thinn'd, or would seem to thin her in a day,  
A joyous to dilate, as toward the light.  
And these had been together from the first.  
Leolin's first nurse was, five years after, hers :  
So much the boy foreran ; but when his date  
Doubled her own, for want of playmates, he  
(Since Averill was a decad and a half  
His elder, and their parents underground)  
Had tost his ball and flown his kite, and roll'd  
His hoop to pleasure Edith, with her dipt

Against the rush of the air in the prone swing,  
Made blossom-ball or daisy-chain, arranged  
Her garden, sow'd her name and kept it green  
In living letters, told her fairy-tales,  
Show'd her the fairy footings on the grass,  
The little dells of cowslip, fairy palms,  
The petty marestail forest, fairy pines,  
Or from the tiny pitted target blew  
What look'd a flight of fairy arrows aim'd  
All at one mark, all hitting : make-believes  
For Edith and himself : or else he forged,  
But that was later, boyish histories  
Of battle, bold adventure, dungeon, wreck,  
Flights, terrors, sudden rescues, and true love  
Crown'd after trial ; sketches rude and faint,  
But where a passion yet unborn perhaps  
Lay hidden as the music of the moon  
Sleeps in the plain eggs of the nightingale.  
And thus together, save for college-times  
Or Temple-eaten terms, a couple, fair  
As ever painter painted, poet sang,  
Or Heav'n in lavish bounty moulded, grew.  
And more and more, the maiden woman-grown,  
He wasted hours with Averill ; there, when first  
The tented winter-field was broken up  
Into that phalanx of the summer spears  
That soon should wear the garland ; there again  
When burr and bine were gather'd ; lastly there  
At Christmas ; ever welcome at the Hall,  
On whose dull sameness his full tide of youth  
Broke with a phosphorescence cheering even  
My lady ; and the Baronet yet had laid  
No bar between them : dull and self-involved,  
Tall and erect, but bending from his height



With half-allowing smiles for all the world,  
 And mighty courteous in the main — his pride  
 Lay deeper than to wear it as his ring —  
 He, like an Aylmer in his Aylmerism,  
 Would care no more for Leolin's walking with her  
 Than for his old Newfoundland's, when they ran  
 To loose him at the stables, for he rose  
 Twofooted at the limit of his chain,  
 Roaring to make a third: and how should Love,  
 Whom the cross-lightnings of four chance-met eyes  
 Flash into fiery life from nothing, follow  
 Such dear familiarities of dawn?  
 Seldom, but when he does, Master of all.

So these young hearts not knowing that they loved,  
 Not she at least, nor conscious of a bar  
 Between them, nor by plight or broken ring  
 Bound, but an immemorial intimacy,  
 Wander'd at will, but oft accompanied  
 By Averill: his, a brother's love, that hung  
 With wings of brooding shelter o'er her peace,  
 Might have been other, save for Leolin's —  
 Who knows? but so they wander'd, hour by hour  
 Gather'd the blossom that rebloom'd, and drank  
 The magic cup that fill'd itself anew.

A whisper half reveal'd her to herself.  
 For out beyond her lodges, where the brook  
 Vocal, with here and there a silence, ran  
 By sallowy rims, arose the laborers' homes,  
 A frequent haunt of Edith, on low knolls  
 That dimpling died into each other, huts  
 At random scatter'd, each a nest in bloom.  
 Her art, her hand, her counsel all had wrought

About them : here was one that, summer-blanch'd,  
Was parcel-bearded with the traveller's-joy  
In Autumn, parcel ivy-clad ; and here  
The warm-blue breathings of a hidden hearth  
Broke from a bower of vine and honeysuckle :  
One look'd all rosetree, and another wore  
A close-set robe of jasmine sown with stars :  
This had a rosy sea of gillyflowers  
About it ; this, a milky-way on earth,  
Like visions in the Northern dreamer's heavens,  
A lily-avenue climbing to the doors ;  
One, almost to the martin-haunted eaves  
A summer burial deep in hollyhocks ;  
Each, its own charm ; and Edith's everywhere ;  
And Edith ever visitant with him,  
He but less loved than Edith, of her poor :  
For she — so lowly-lovely and so loving,  
Queenly responsive when the loyal hand  
Rose from the clay it work'd in as she past,  
Not sowing hedgerow texts and passing by,  
Nor dealing goodly counsel from a height  
That makes the lowest hate it, but a voice  
Of comfort and an open hand of help,  
A splendid presence flattering the poor roofs  
Revered as theirs, but kindlier than themselves  
To ailing wife or wailing infancy  
Or old bedridden palsy, — was adored ;  
He, loved for her and for himself. A grasp  
Having the warmth and muscle of the heart,  
A childly way with children, and a laugh  
Ringing like proven golden coinage true,  
Were no false passport to that easy realm,  
Where once with Leolin at her side the girl,  
Nursing a child, and turning to the warmth

The tender pink five-beaded baby-soles,  
 Heard the good mother softly whisper ' Bless,  
 God bless 'em ; marriages are made in Heaven.'

A flash of semi-jealousy clear'd it to her.  
 My Lady's Indian kinsman unannounced  
 With half a score of swarthy faces came.  
 His own, tho' keen and bold and soldierly,  
 Sear'd by the close ecliptic, was not fair ;  
 Fairer his talk, a tongue that ruled the hour,  
 Tho' seeming boastful : so when first he dash'd  
 Into the chronicle of a deedful day,  
 Sir Aylmer half forgot his lazy smile  
 Of patron ' Good ! my lady's kinsman ! good !'  
 My lady with her fingers interlock'd,  
 And rotatory thumbs on silken knees,  
 ' Call'd all her vital spirits into each ear  
 To listen : unawares they flitted off,  
 Busying themselves about the flowerage  
 That stood from out a stiff brocade in which,  
 The meteor of a splendid season, she,  
 Once with this kinsman, ah so long ago,  
 Stept thro' the stately minuet of those days :  
 But Edith's eager fancy hurried with him  
 Snatch'd thro' the perilous passes of his life :  
 Till Leolin ever watchful of her eye  
 Hated him with a momentary hate.  
 Wife-hunting, as the rumor ran, was he :  
 I know not, for he spoke not, only shower'd  
 His oriental gifts on everyone  
 And most on Edith : like a storm he came,  
 And shook the house, and like a storm he went.

Among the gifts he left her (possibly

He flow'd and ebb'd uncertain, to return  
When others had been tested) there was one,  
A dagger, in rich sheath with jewels on it  
Sprinkled about in gold that branch'd itself  
Fine as ice-ferns on January panes  
Made by a breath. I know not whence at first,  
Nor of what race, the work ; but as he told  
The story, storming a hill-fort of thieves  
He got it ; for their captain after fight,  
His comrades having fought their last below,  
Was climbing up the valley ; at whom he shot :  
Down from the beetling crag to which he clung  
Tumbled the tawny rascal at his feet,  
This dagger with him, which when now admired  
By Edith whom his pleasure was to please,  
At once the costly Sahib yielded to her.

And Leolin, coming after he was gone,  
Tost over all her presents petulantly :  
And when she show'd the wealthy scabbard, saying  
' Look what a lovely piece of workmanship !'  
Slight was his answer ' Well — I care not for it :'  
Then playing with the blade he prick'd his hand,  
' A gracious gift to give a lady, this !'  
' But would it be more gracious' ask'd the girl  
' Were I to give this gift of his to one  
That is no lady ?' ' Gracious ? No' said he.  
' Me ? — but I cared not for it. O pardon me,  
I seem to be ungraciousness itself.'  
' Take it' she added sweetly ' tho' his gift ;  
For I am more ungracious ev'n than you,  
I care not for it either ;' and he said  
' Why then I love it :' but Sir Aylmer past,  
And neither loved nor liked the thing he heard.

The next day came a neighbor. Blues and reds  
They talk'd of : blues were sure of it, he thought :  
Then of the latest fox — where started — kill'd  
In such a bottom : ' Peter had the brush,  
My Peter, first : ' and did Sir Aylmer know  
That great pock-pitten fellow had been caught ?  
Then made his pleasure echo, hand to hand,  
And rolling as it were the substance of it  
Between his palms a moment up and down —  
' The birds were warm, the birds were warm upon him ;  
We have him now : ' and had Sir Aylmer heard —  
Nay, but he must — the land was ringing of it —  
This blacksmith-border marriage — one they knew —  
Raw from the nursery — who could trust a child ?  
That cursed France with her egalities !  
And did Sir Aylmer (deferentially  
With nearing chair and lower'd accent) think —  
For people talk'd — that it was wholly wise  
To let that handsome fellow Averill walk  
So freely with his daughter ? people talk'd —  
The boy might get a notion into him ;  
The girl might be entangled ere she knew.  
Sir Aylmer Aylmer slowly stiffening spoke :  
' The girl and boy, Sir, know their differences !'  
' Good ' said his friend ' but watch ! ' and he ' enough,  
More than enough, Sir ! I can guard my own.'  
They parted, and Sir Aylmer Aylmer watch'd.

Pale, for on her the thunders of the house  
Had fallen first, was Edith that same night ;  
Pale as the Jephtha's daughter, a rough piece  
Of early rigid color, under which  
Withdrawing by the counter door to that  
Which Leolin open'd, she cast back upon him

A piteous glance, and vanish'd. He, as one  
Caught in a burst of unexpected storm,  
And pelted with outrageous epithets,  
Turning beheld the Powers of the House  
On either side the hearth, indignant ; her,  
Cooling her false cheek with a featherfan,  
Him glaring, by his own stale devil spurr'd,  
And, like a beast hard-ridden, breathing hard.  
'Ungenerous, dishonorable, base,  
Presumptuous ! trusted as he was with her,  
The sole succeder to their wealth, their lands,  
The last remaining pillar of their house,  
The one transmitter of their ancient name,  
Their child.' 'Our child !' 'Our heiress !' 'Ours !' for  
still,

Like echoes from beyond a hollow, came  
Her sicklier iteration. Last he said  
'Boy, mark me ! for your fortunes are to make.  
I swear you shall not make them out of mine.  
Now inasmuch as you have practised on her,  
Perplext her, made her half forget herself,  
Swerve from her duty to herself and us —  
Things in an Aylmer deem'd impossible,  
Far as we track ourselves — I say that this, —  
Else I withdraw favor and countenance  
From you and yours for ever — shall you do.  
Sir, when you see her — but you shall not see her —  
No, you shall write, and not to her, but me :  
And you shall say that having spoken with me,  
And after look'd into yourself, you find  
That you meant nothing — as indeed you know  
That you meant nothing. Such a match as this !  
Impossible, prodigious !' These were words,  
As meted by his measure of himself,

Arguing boundless forbearance : after which,  
And Leolin's horror-stricken answer, ' I  
So foul a traitor to myself and her,  
Never oh never,' for about as long  
As the wind-hover hangs in balance, paused  
Sir Aylmer reddening from the storm within,  
Then broke all bonds of courtesy, and crying  
' Boy, should I find you by my doors again,  
My men shall lash you from them like a dog ;  
Hence ! ' with a sudden execration drove  
The footstool from before him, and arose ;  
So, stammering ' scoundrel ' out of teeth that ground  
As in a dreadful dream, while Leolin still  
Retreated half-aghast, the fierce old man  
Follow'd, and under his own lintel stood  
Storming with lifted hands, a hoary face  
Meet for the reverence of the hearth, but now,  
Beneath a pale and unimpassion'd moon,  
Vext with unworthy madness, and deform'd.

Slowly and conscious of the rageful eye  
That watch'd him, till he heard the ponderous door  
Close, crashing with long echoes thro' the land,  
Went Leolin ; then, his passions all in flood  
And masters of his motion, furiously  
Down thro' the bright lawns to his brother's ran,  
And foam'd away his heart at Averill's ear :  
Whom Averill solaced as he might, amazed :  
The man was his, had been his father's, friend :  
He must have seen, himself had seen it long ;  
He must have known, himself had known : besides,  
He never yet had set his daughter forth  
Here in the woman-markets of the west,  
Where our Caucasians let themselves be sold.



Some one, he thought, had slander'd Leolin to him.  
' Brother, for I have loved you more as son  
Than brother, let me tell you : I myself —  
What is their pretty saying ? jilted, is it ?  
Jilted I was : I say it for your peace.  
Pain'd, and, as bearing in myself the shame  
The woman should have borne, humiliated,  
I lived for years a stunted sunless life ;  
Till after our good parents past away  
Watching your growth, I seem'd again to grow.  
Leolin, I almost sin in envying you :  
The very whitest lamb in all my fold  
Loves you : I know her : the worst thought she has  
Is whiter even than her pretty hand :  
She must prove true : for, brother, where two fight  
The strongest wins, and truth and love are strength,  
And you are happy : let her parents be.'

But Leolin cried out the more upon them —  
Insolent, brainless, heartless ! heiress, wealth,  
Their wealth, their heiress ! wealth enough was theirs  
For twenty matches. Were he lord of this,  
Why twenty boys and girls should marry on it,  
And forty blest ones bless him, and himself  
Be wealthy still, ay wealthier. He believed  
This filthy marriage-hindering Mammon made  
The harlot of the cities : nature crost  
Was mother of the foul adulteries  
That saturate soul with body. Name, too ! name,  
Their ancient name ! they *might* be proud ; its worth  
Was being Edith's. Ah how pale she had look'd  
Darling, to-night ! they must have rated her  
Beyond all tolerance. These old pheasant-lords,  
These partridge-breeders of a thousand years,



Who had mildew'd in their thousands, doing nothing  
Since Egbert — why, the greater their disgrace !  
Fall back upon a name ! rest, rot in that !  
Not *keep* it noble, make it nobler ? fools,  
With such a vantage-ground for nobleness !  
He had known a man, a quintessence of man,  
The life of all — who madly loved — and he,  
Thwarted by one of these old father-fools,  
Had rioted his life out, and made an end.  
He would not do it ! her sweet face and faith  
Held him from that : but he had powers, he knew it :  
Back would he to his studies, make a name,  
Name, fortune too : the world should ring of him  
To shame these mouldy Aylmers in their graves :  
Chancellor, or what is greatest would he be —  
' O brother, I am grieved to learn your grief —  
Give me my fling, and let me say my say.'

At which, like one that sees his own excess,  
And easily forgives it as his own,  
He laugh'd ; and then was mute ; but presently  
Wept like a storm : and honest Averill seeing  
How low his brother's mood had fallen, fetch'd  
His richest beeswing from a binn reserved  
For banquets, praised the waning red, and told  
The vintage — when *this* Aylmer came of age —  
Then drank and past it ; till at length the two,  
Tho' Leolin flamed and fell again, agreed  
That much allowance must be made for men.  
After an angry dream this kindlier glow  
Faded with morning, but his purpose held.

Yet once by night again the lovers met,  
A perilous meeting under the tall pines

That darken'd all the northward of her Hall.  
Him, to her meek and modest bosom prest  
In agony, she promised that no force,  
Persuasion, no, nor death could alter her :  
He, passionately hopefuller, would go,  
Labor for his own Edith, and return  
In such a sunlight of prosperity  
He should not be rejected. 'Write to me !  
They loved me, and because I love their child  
They hate me : there is war between us, dear,  
Which breaks all bonds but ours ; we must remain  
Sacred to one another.' So they talk'd,  
Poor children, for their comfort : the wind blew ;  
The rain of heaven, and their own bitter tears,  
Tears, and the careless rain of heaven, mixt  
Upon their faces, as they kiss'd each other  
In darkness, and above them roar'd the pine.

So Leolin went ; and as we task ourselves  
To learn a language known but smatteringly  
In phrases here and there at random, toil'd  
Mastering the lawless science of our law,  
That codeless myriad of precedent,  
That wilderness of single instances,  
Thro' which a few, by wit or fortune led,  
May beat a pathway out to wealth and fame.  
The jests, that flash'd about the pleader's room,  
Lightning of the hour, the pun, the scurrilous tale, —  
Old scandals buried now seven decads deep  
In other scandals that have lived and died,  
And left the living scandal that shall die —  
Were dead to him already ; bent as he was  
To make disproof of scorn, and strong in hopes,  
And prodigal of all brain-labor he,

Charier of sleep, and wine and exercise,  
Except when for a breathing-while at eve,  
Some niggard fraction of an hour, he ran  
Beside the river-bank : and then indeed  
Harder the times were, and the hands of power  
Were bloodier, and the according hearts of men  
Seem'd harder too ; but the soft river-breeze,  
Which fann'd the gardens of that rival rose  
Yet fragrant in a heart remembering  
His former talks with Edith, on him breathed  
Far purelier in his rushings to and fro,  
After his books, to flush his blood with air,  
Then to his books again. My lady's cousin,  
Half-sickening of his pension'd afternoon,  
Drove in upon the student once or twice,  
Ran a Malayan muck against the times,  
Had golden hopes for France and all mankind,  
Answer'd all queries touching those at home  
With a heaved shoulder and a saucy smile,  
And fain had haled him out into the world,  
And air'd him there : his nearer friend would say  
'Screw not the chord too sharply lest it snap.'  
Then left alone he pluck'd her dagger forth  
From where his worldless heart had kept it warm,  
Kissing his vows upon it like a knight.  
And wrinkled benchers often talk'd of him  
Approvingly, and prophesied his rise :  
For heart, I think, help'd head : her letters too,  
Tho' far between, and coming fitfully  
Like broken music, written as she found  
Or made occasion, being strictly watch'd,  
Charm'd him thro' every labyrinth till he saw  
An end, a hope, a light breaking upon him.

But they that cast her spirit into flesh,  
Her worldly-wise begetters, plagued themselves  
To sell her, those good parents, for her good.  
Whatever eldest-born of rank or wealth  
Might lie within their compass, him they lured  
Into their net made pleasant by the baits  
Of gold and beauty, wooing him to woo.  
So month by month the noise about their doors,  
And distant blaze of those dull banquets, made  
The nightly wirer of their innocent hare  
Falter before he took it. All in vain.  
Sullen, defiant, pitying, wroth, return'd  
Leolin's rejected rivals from their suit  
So often, that the folly taking wings  
Slipt o'er those lazy limits down the wind  
With rumor, and became in other fields  
A mockery to the yeomen over ale,  
And laughter to their lords : but those at home,  
As hunters round a hunted creature draw  
The cordon close and closer toward the death,  
Narrow'd her goings out and comings in ;  
Forbad her first the house of Averill,  
Then closed her access to the wealthier farms,  
Last from her own home-circle of the poor  
They barr'd her : yet she bore it : yet her cheek  
Kept color : wondrous ! but, O mystery !  
What amulet drew her down to that old oak,  
So old, that twenty years before, a part  
Falling had let appear the brand of John —  
Once grovelike, each huge arm a tree, but now  
The broken base of a black tower, a cave  
Of touchwood, with a single flourishing spray.  
There the manorial lord too curiously  
Raking in that millennial touchwood-dust

Found for himself a bitter treasure-trove ;  
Burst his own wyvern on the seal, and read  
Writhing a letter from his child, for which  
Came at the moment Leolin's emissary,  
A crippled lad, and coming turn'd to fly,  
But scared with threats of jail and halter gave  
To him that fluster'd his poor parish wits  
The letter which he brought, and swore besides  
To play their go-between as heretofore  
Nor let them know themselves betray'd, and then,  
Soul-stricken at their kindness to him, went  
Hating his own lean heart and miserable.

Thenceforward oft from out a despot dream  
Panting he woke, and oft as early as dawn  
Aroused the black republic on his elms,  
Sweeping the frothfly from the fescue, brush'd  
Thro' the dim meadow toward his treasure-trove,  
Seized it, took home, and to my lady, who made  
A downward crescent of her minion mouth,  
Listless in all despondence, read ; and tore,  
As if the living passion symbol'd there  
Were living nerves to feel the rent ; and burnt,  
Now chafing at his own great self defied,  
Now striking on huge stumbling-blocks of scorn  
In babyisms, and dear diminutives  
Scatter'd all over the vocabulary  
Of such a love as like a chidden babe,  
After much wailing, hush'd itself at last  
Hopeless of answer : then tho' Averill wrote  
And bad him with good heart sustain himself —  
All would be well — the lover heeded not,  
But passionately restless came and went,  
And rustling once at night about the place,

There by a keeper shot at, slightly hurt,  
Raging return'd : nor was it well for her  
Kept to the garden now, and grove of pines,  
Watch'd even there ; and one was set to watch  
The watcher, and Sir Aylmer watch'd them all,  
Yet bitterer from his readings : once indeed,  
Warm'd with his wines, or taking pride in her,  
She look'd so sweet, he kiss'd her tenderly  
Not knowing what possess'd him : that one kiss  
Was Leolin's one strong rival upon earth ;  
Seconded, for my lady follow'd suit,  
Seem'd hope's returning rose : and then ensued  
A Martin's summer of his faded love,  
Or ordeal by kindness ; after this  
He seldom crost his child without a sneer ;  
The mother flow'd in shallower acrimonies :  
Never one kindly smile, one kindly word :  
So that the gentle creature shut from all  
Her charitable use, and face to face  
With twenty months of silence, slowly lost  
Nor greatly cared to lose, her hold on life.  
Last, some low fever ranging round to spy  
The weakness of a people or a house,  
Like flies that haunt a wound, or deer, or men,  
Or almost all that is, hurting the hurt —  
Save Christ as we believe him — found the girl  
And flung her down upon a couch of fire,  
Where careless of the household faces near,  
And crying upon the name of Leolin,  
She, and with her the race of Aylmer, past.

Star to star vibrates light : may soul to soul  
Strike thro' a finer element of her own ?  
So, — from afar, — touch as at once ? or why

That night, that moment, when she named his name,  
Did the keen shriek 'yes love, yes Edith, yes,'  
Shrill, till the comrade of his chambers woke,  
And came upon him half-arisen from sleep,  
With a weird bright eye, sweating and trembling,  
His hair as it were crackling into flames,  
His body half flung forward in pursuit,  
And his long arms stretch'd as to grasp a flyer :  
Nor knew he wherefore he had made the cry ;  
And being much befool'd and idioted  
By the rough amity of the other, sank  
As into sleep again. The second day,  
My lady's Indian kinsman rushing in,  
A breaker of the bitter news from home,  
Found a dead man, a letter edged with death  
Beside him, and the dagger which himself  
Gave Edith, redden'd with no bandit's blood :  
' From Edith ' was engraven on the blade.

Then Averill went and gazed upon his death.  
And when he came again, his flock believed —  
Beholding how the years which are not Time's  
Had blasted him — that many thousand days  
Were clipt by horror from his term of life.  
Yet the sad mother, for the second death  
Scarce touch'd her thro' that nearness of the first,  
And being used to find her pastor texts,  
Sent to the harrow'd brother, praying him  
To speak before the people of her child,  
And fixt the Sabbath. Darkly that day rose :  
Autumn's mock sunshine of the faded woods  
Was all the life of it ; for hard on these,  
A breathless burthen of low-folded heavens  
Stifled and chill'd at once : but every roof



Sent out a listener : many too had known  
Edith among the hamlets round, and since  
The parents' harshness and the hapless loves  
And double death were widely murmur'd, left  
Their own gray tower, or plain-faced tabernacle,  
To hear him ; all in mourning these, and those  
With blots of it about them, ribbon, glove  
Or kerchief ; while the church, — one night, except  
For greenish glimmerings thro' the lancets, — made  
Still paler the pale head of him, who tower'd  
Above them, with his hopes in either grave.

Long o'er his bent brows linger'd Averill,  
His face magnetic to the hand from which  
Livid he pluck'd it forth, and labor'd thro'  
His brief prayer-prelude, gave the verse ' Behold,  
Your house is left unto you desolate !'  
But lapsed into so long a pause again  
As half amazed half frightened all his flock :  
Then from his height and loneliness of grief  
Bore down in flood, and dash'd his angry heart  
Against the desolations of the world.

Never since our bad earth became one sea,  
Which rolling o'er the palaces of the proud,  
And all but those who knew the living God —  
Eight that were left to make a purer world —  
When since had flood, fire, earthquake, thunder, wrought  
Such waste and havock as the idolatries,  
Which from the low light of mortality  
Shot up their shadows to the Heaven of Heavens,  
And worshipt their own darkness as the Highest ?  
' Gash thyself, priest, and honor thy brute Baäl,  
And to thy worst self sacrifice thyself,



For with thy worst self hast thou clothed thy God.  
Then came a Lord in no wise like to Baäl.  
The babe shall lead the lion. Surely now  
The wilderness shall blossom as the rose.  
Crown thyself, worm, and worship thine own lusts ! —  
No coarse and blockish God of acreage  
Stands at thy gate for thee to grovel to —  
Thy God is far diffused in noble groves  
And princely halls, and farms, and flowing lawns,  
And heaps of living gold that daily grow,  
And title-scrolls and gorgeous heraldries.  
In such a shape dost thou behold thy God.  
Thou wilt not gash thy flesh for *him*; for thine  
Fares richly, in fine linen, not a hair  
Ruffled upon the scarfskin, even while  
The deathless ruler of thy dying house  
Is wounded to the death that cannot die ;  
And tho' thou numberest with the followers  
Of One who cried 'leave all and follow me.'  
Thee therefore with His light about thy feet,  
Thee with His message ringing in thine ears,  
Thee shall thy brother man, the Lord from Heaven,  
Born of a village girl, carpenter's son,  
Wonderful, Prince of peace, the Mighty God,  
Count the more base idolater of the two ;  
Crueller : as not passing thro' the fire  
Bodies, but souls — thy children's — thro' the smoke,  
The blight of low desires — darkening thine own  
To thine own likeness ; or if one of these,  
Thy better born unhappily from thee,  
Should, as by miracle, grow straight and fair —  
Friends, I was bid to speak of such a one  
By those who most have cause to sorrow for her —  
Fairer than Rachel by the palmy well,

Fairer than Ruth among the fields of corn,  
Fair as the Angel that said 'hail' she seem'd,  
Who entering fill'd the house with sudden light.  
For so mine own was brighten'd : where indeed  
The roof so lowly but that beam of Heaven  
Dawn'd sometimes thro' the doorway ? whose the babe  
Too ragged to be fondled on her lap,  
Warm'd at her bosom ? The poor child of shame,  
The common care whom no one cared for, leapt  
To greet her, wasting his forgotten heart,  
As with the mother he had never known,  
In gambols ; for her fresh and innocent eyes  
Had such a star of morning in their blue,  
That all neglected places of the field  
Broke into nature's music when they saw her.  
Low was her voice, but won mysterious way  
Thro' the seal'd ear to which a louder one  
Was all but silence — free of alms her hand —  
The hand that robed your cottage-walls with flowers  
Has often toil'd to clothe your little ones ;  
How often placed upon the sick man's brow  
Cool'd it, or laid his feverous pillow smooth !  
Had you one sorrow and she shared it not ?  
One burthen and she would not lighten it ?  
One spiritual doubt she did not soothe ?  
Or when some heat of difference sparkled out,  
How sweetly would she glide between your wraths,  
And steal you from each other ! for she walk'd  
Wearing the light yoke of that Lord of love,  
Who still'd the rolling wave of Galilee !  
And one — of him I was not bid to speak —  
Was always with her, whom you also knew.  
Him too you loved, for he was worthy love.  
And these had been together from the first ;

They might have been together till the last.  
Friends, this frail bark of ours, when sorely tried,  
May wreck itself without the pilot's guilt,  
Without the captain's knowledge : hope with me.  
Whose shame is that, if he went hence with shame ?  
Nor mine the fault, if losing both of these  
I cry to vacant chairs and widow'd walls,  
" My house is left unto me desolate."

While thus he spoke, his hearers wept ; but some,  
Sons of the glebe, with other frowns than those  
That knit themselves for summer shadow, scowl'd  
At their great lord. He, when it seem'd he saw  
No pale sheet-lightnings from afar, but fork'd  
Of the near storm, and aiming at his head,  
Sat anger-charm'd from sorrow, soldierlike,  
Erect : but when the preacher's cadence flow'd.  
Softening thro' all the gentle attributes  
Of his lost child, the wife, who watch'd his face,  
Paled at a sudden twitch of his iron mouth ;  
And ' O pray God that he hold up ' she thought  
' Or surely I shall shame myself and him.'

' Nor yours the blame — for who beside your hearths  
Can take her place — if echoing me you cry  
" Our house is left unto us desolate ?"  
But thou, O thou that killest, hadst thou known,  
O thou that stonest, hadst thou understood  
The things belonging to thy peace and ours !  
Is there no prophet but the voice that calls  
Doom upon kings, or in the waste ' Repent ' ?  
Is not our own child on the narrow way,  
Who down to those that saunter in the broad  
Cries ' come up hither,' as a prophet to us ?

Is there no stoning save with flint and rock ?  
Yes, as the dead we weep for testify —  
No desolation but by sword and fire ?  
Yes, as your moanings witness, and myself  
Am lonelier, darker, earthlier for my loss.  
Give me your prayers, for he is past your prayers,  
Not past the living fount of pity in Heaven.  
But I that thought myself long-suffering, meek,  
Exceeding "poor in spirit" — how the words  
Have twisted back upon themselves, and mean  
Vileness, we are grown so proud — I wish'd my voice  
A rushing tempest of the wrath of God  
To blow these sacrifices thro' the world —  
Sent like the twelve-divided concubine  
To inflame the tribes : but there — out yonder — earth  
Lightens from her own central Hell — O there  
The red fruit of an old idolatry —  
The heads of chiefs and princes fall so fast,  
They cling together in the ghastly sack —  
The land all shambles — naked marriages  
Flash from the bridge, and ever-murder'd France,  
By shores that darken with the gathering wolf,  
Runs in a river of blood to the sick sea.  
Is this a time to madden madness then ?  
Was this a time for these to flaunt their pride ?  
May Pharaoh's darkness, folds as dense as those  
Which hid the Holiest from the people's eyes  
Ere the great death, shroud this great sin from all :  
Doubtless our narrow world must canvass it :  
O rather pray for those and pity them,  
Who thro' their own desire accomplish'd bring  
Their own gray hairs with sorrow to the grave —  
Who broke the bond which they desired to break, —  
Which else had link'd their race with times to come —

Who wove coarse webs to snare her purity,  
Grossly contriving their dear daughter's good —  
Poor souls, and knew not what they did, but sat  
Ignorant, devising their own daughter's death !  
May not that earthly chastisement suffice ?  
Have not our love and reverence left them bare ?  
Will not another take their heritage ?  
Will there be children's laughter in their hall  
For ever and for ever, or one stone  
Left on another, or is it a light thing  
That I their guest, their host, their ancient friend,  
I made by these the last of all my race  
Must cry to these the last of theirs, as cried  
Christ ere His agony to those that swore  
Not by the temple but the gold, and made  
Their own traditions God, and slew the Lord,  
And left their memories a world's curse — “ Behold,  
Your house is left unto you desolate ? ” ’

Ended he had not, but she brook'd no more :  
Long since her heart had beat remorselessly,  
Her cramp'd-up sorrow pain'd her, and a sense  
Of meanness in her unresisting life.  
Then their eyes vex'd her ; for on entering  
He had cast the curtains of their seat aside —  
Black velvet of the costliest — she herself  
Had seen to that : fain had she closed them now,  
Yet dared not stir to do it, only near'd  
Her husband inch by inch, but when she laid,  
Wifelike, her hand in one of his, he veil'd  
His face with the other, and at once, as falls  
A creeper when the prop is broken, fell  
The woman shrieking at his feet, and swoon'd.  
Then her own people bore along the nave

Her pendent hands, and narrow meagre face  
Seam'd with the shallow cares of fifty years :  
And her the Lord of all the landscape round  
Ev'n to its last horizon, and of all  
Who peer'd at him so keenly, follow'd out  
Tall and erect, but in the middle aisle  
Reel'd, as a footsore ox in crowded ways  
Stumbling across the market to his death,  
Unpitied ; for he groped as blind, and seem'd  
Always about to fall, grasping the pews  
And oaken finials till he touch'd the door ;  
Yet to the lychgate, where his chariot stood,  
Strode from the porch, tall and erect again.

But nevermore did either pass the gate  
Save under pall with bearers. In one month,  
Thro' weary and yet ever wearier hours,  
The childless mother went to seek her child ;  
And when he felt the silence of his house  
About him, and the change and not the change,  
And those fixt eyes of painted ancestors  
Staring for ever from their gilded walls  
On him their last descendant, his own head  
Began to droop, to fall ; the man became  
Imbecile ; his one word was ' desolate ' ;  
Dead for two years before his death was he ;  
But when the second Christmas came, escaped  
His keepers, and the silence which he felt,  
To find a deeper in the narrow gloom  
By wife and child ; nor wanted at his end  
The dark retinue reverencing death  
At golden thresholds ; nor from tender hearts,  
And those who sorrow'd o'er a vanish'd race,  
Pity, the violet on the tyrant's grave.

Then the great Hall was wholly broken down,  
 And the broad woodland parcell'd into farms ;  
 And where the two contrived their daughter's good,  
 Lies the hawk's cast, the mole has made his run,  
 The hedgehog underneath the plaintain bores,  
 The rabbit fondles his own harmless face,  
 The slow-worm creeps, and the thin weasel there  
 Follows the mouse, and all is open field.

*Darwin Cummings*  
 X

## SEA DREAMS.

A CITY clerk, but gently born and bred ;  
 His wife, an unknown artist's orphan child —  
 One babe was theirs, a Margaret, three years old :  
 They, thinking that her clear germander eye  
 Droopt in the giant-factoried city-gloom,  
 Came, with a month's leave given them, to the sea :  
 For which his gains were dock'd, however small :  
 Small were his gains, and hard his work ; besides,  
 Their slender household fortunes (for the man  
 Had risk'd his little) like the little thrift,  
 Trembled in perilous places o'er a deep :  
 And oft, when sitting all alone, his face  
 Would darken, as he cursed his credulousness,  
 And that one unctuous mouth which lured him, rogue,  
 To buy strange shares in some Peruvian mine.  
 Now seaward-bound for health they gain'd a coast,  
 All sand and cliff and deep-inrunning cave,  
 At close of day ; slept, woke, and went the next,



The Sabbath, pious variers from the church,  
To chapel ; where a heated pulpiteer,  
Not preaching simple Christ to simple men,  
Announced the coming doom, and fulminated  
Against the scarlet woman and her creed :  
For sideways up he swung his arms, and shriek'd  
'Thus, thus with violence,' ev'n as if he held  
The Apocalyptic millstone, and himself  
Were that great Angel ; 'Thus with violence  
Shall Babylon be cast into the sea ;  
Then comes the close.' The gentle-hearted wife  
Sat shuddering at the ruin of a world ;  
He at his own : but when the wordy storm  
Had ended, forth they came and paced the shore,  
Ran in and out the long sea-framing caves,  
Drank the large air, and saw, but scarce believed  
(The sootflake of so many a summer still  
Clung to their fancies) that they saw, the sea.  
So now on sand they walk'd, and now on cliff,  
Lingering about the thymy promontories,  
Till all the sails were darken'd in the west,  
And rosed in the east : then homeward and to bed :  
Where she, who kept a tender Christian hope  
Haunting a holy text, and still to that  
Returning, as the bird returns, at night,  
'Let not the sun go down upon your wrath,'  
Said, 'Love, forgive him : ' but he did not speak ;  
And silenced by that silence lay the wife,  
Remembering her dear Lord who died for all,  
And musing on the little lives of men,  
And how they mar this little by their feuds.

But while the two were sleeping, a full tide  
Rose with ground-swell, which, on the foremost rocks



Touching, upjetted in spirts of wild sea-smoke,  
And scaled in sheets of wasteful foam, and fell  
In vast sea-cataracts — ever and anon  
Dead claps of thunder from within the cliffs  
Heard thro' the living roar. At this the babe,  
Their Margaret cradled near them, wail'd and woke  
The mother, and the father suddenly cried,  
'A wreck, a wreck !' then turn'd, and groaning said,

'Forgive ! How many will say, "forgive," and find  
A sort of absolution in the sound  
To hate a little longer ! No ; the sin  
That neither God nor man can well forgive,  
Hypocrisy, I saw it in him at once.  
Is it so true that second thoughts are best ?  
Not first, and third, which are a ripper first ?  
Too ripe, too late ! they come too late for use.  
Ah love, there surely lives in man and beast  
Something divine to warn them of their foes :  
And such a sense, when first I fronted him,  
Said, "trust him not ;" but after, when I came  
To know him more, I lost it, knew him less ;  
Fought with what seem'd my own uncharity ;  
Sat at his table ; drank his costly wines ;  
Made more and more allowance for his talk ;  
Went further, fool ! and trusted him with all,  
All my poor scrapings from a dozen years  
Of dust and deskwork : there is no such mine,  
None ; but a gulf of ruin, swallowing gold,  
Not making. Ruin'd ! ruin'd ! the sea roars  
Ruin : a fearful night !'

'Not fearful ; fair,'  
Said the good wife, 'if every star in heaven

Can make it fair : you do but hear the tide.  
Had you ill dreams ?'

' O yes,' he said, ' I dream'd  
Of such a tide swelling toward the land,  
And I from out the boundless outer deep  
Swept with it to the shore, and enter'd one  
Of those dark caves that run beneath the cliffs.  
I thought the motion of the boundless deep  
Bore through the cave, and I was heaved upon it  
In darkness : then I saw one lovely star  
Larger and larger. " What a world," I thought,  
" To live in ! " but in moving on I found  
Only the landward exit of the cave,  
Bright with the sun upon the stream beyond :  
And near the light a giant woman sat,  
All over earthy, like a piece of earth,  
A pickaxe in her hand : then out I slipt  
Into a land all sun and blossom, trees  
As high as heaven, and every bird that sings :  
And here the night-light flickering in my eyes  
Awoke me.'

' That was then your dream,' she said,  
' Not sad, but sweet.'

' So sweet, I lay,' said he,  
' And mused upon it, drifting up the stream  
In fancy, till I slept again, and pieced  
The broken vision ; for I dream'd that still  
The motion of the great deep bore me on,  
And that the woman walk'd upon the brink :  
I wonder'd at her strength, and ask'd her of it :  
" It came," she said, " by working in the mines : "

O then to ask her of my shares, I thought ;  
And ask'd ; but not a word ; she shook her head.  
And then the motion of the current ceased,  
And there was rolling thunder ; and we reach'd  
A mountain, like a wall of burs and thorns ;  
But she with her strong feet up the steep hill  
Trod out a path : I follow'd ; and at top  
She pointed seaward : there a fleet of glass,  
'That seem'd a fleet of jewels under me,  
Sailing along before a gloomy cloud  
That not one moment ceased to thunder, past  
In sunshine : right across its track there lay,  
Down in the water, a long reef of gold,  
Or what seem'd gold : and I was glad at first  
To think that in our often-ransack'd world  
Still so much gold was left ; and then I fear'd  
Lest the gay navy there should splinter on it,  
And fearing waved my arm to warn them off ;  
An idle signal, for the brittle fleet  
(I thought I could have died to save it) near'd,  
'Touch'd, clink'd, and clash'd, and vanish'd, and I woke,  
I heard the clash so clearly. Now I see  
My dream was Life ; the woman honest Work ;  
And my poor venture but a fleet of glass  
Wreck'd on a reef of visionary gold.'

'Nay,' said the kindly wife to comfort him,  
'You raised your arm, you tumbled down and broke  
The glass with little Margaret's medicine in it ;  
And, breaking that, you made and broke your dream :  
A trifle makes a dream, a trifle breaks.'

'No trifle,' groan'd the husband ; 'yesterday  
I met him suddenly in the street, and ask'd

That which I ask'd the woman in my dream.  
Like her, he shook his head. "Show me the books!"  
He dodged me with a long and loose account.  
"The books, the books!" but he, he could not wait,  
Bound on a matter he of life and death:  
When the great Books (see Daniel seven and ten)  
Were open'd, I should find he meant me well;  
And then began to bloat himself, and ooze  
All over with the fat affectionate smile  
That makes the widow lean. "My dearest friend,  
Have faith, have faith! We live by faith," said he;  
"And all things work together for the good  
Of those"—it makes me sick to quote him—last  
Gript my hand hard, and with God-bless-you went.  
I stood like one that had received a blow:  
I found a hard friend in his loose accounts,  
A loose one in the hard grip of his hand,  
A curse in his God-bless-you: then my eyes  
Pursued him down the street, and far away,  
Among the honest shoulders of the crowd,  
Read rascal in the motions of his back,  
And scoundrel in the supple-sliding knee.'

'Was he so bound, poor soul?' said the good wife;  
'So are we all: but do not call him, love,  
Before you prove him, rogue, and proved, forgive.  
His gain is loss; for he that wrongs his friend  
Wrongs himself more, and ever bears about  
A silent court of justice in his breast,  
Himself the judge and jury, and himself  
The prisoner at the bar, ever condemn'd:  
And that drags down his life: then comes what comes  
Hereafter: and he meant, he said he meant,  
Perhaps he meant, or partly meant, you well.'

“ With all his conscience and one eye askew ” —  
Love, let me quote these lines, that you may learn  
A man is likewise counsel for himself,  
Too often, in that silent court of yours —  
“ With all his conscience and one eye askew,  
So false, he partly took himself for true ;  
Whose pious talk, when most his heart was dry,  
Made wet the crafty crowsfoot round his eye ;  
Who, never naming God except for gain,  
So never took that useful name in vain ;  
Made Him his catspaw and the Cross his tool,  
And Christ the bait to trap his dupe and fool ;  
Nor deeds of gift, but gifts of grace he forged,  
And snakelike slimed his victim ere he gorged ;  
And oft at Bible meetings, o’er the rest  
Arising, did his holy oily best,  
Dropping the too rough H in Hell and Heaven,  
To spread the Word by which himself had thriven.”  
How like you this old satire ? ’

‘ Nay,’ she said,  
‘ I loathe it : he had never kindly heart,  
Nor ever cared to better his own kind,  
Who first wrote satire, with no pity in it.  
But will you hear *my* dream, for I had one  
That altogether went to music ? Still  
It awed me.’

Then she told it, having dream’d  
Of that same coast.

— ‘ But round the North, a light,  
A belt, it seem’d, of luminous vapor, lay,  
And ever in it a low musical note

Swell'd up and died ; and, as it swell'd, a ridge  
Of breaker issued from the belt, and still  
Grew with the growing note, and when the note  
Had reach'd a thunderous fulness, on those cliffs  
Broke, mixt with awful light (the same as that  
Living within the belt) whereby she saw  
That all those lines of cliffs were cliffs no more,  
But huge cathedral fronts of every age,  
Grave, florid, stern, as far as eye could see,  
One after one : and then the great ridge drew,  
Lessening to the lessening music, back,  
And past into the belt and swell'd again  
Slowly to music : ever when it broke  
The statues, king or saint, or founder fell ;  
Then from the gaps and chasms of ruin left  
Came men and women in dark clusters round,  
Some crying, "Set them up ! they shall not fall !"   
And others "Let them lie, for they have fall'n."  
And still they strove and wrangled : and she grieved  
In her strange dream, she knew not why, to find  
Their wildest wailings never out of tune  
With that sweet note ; and ever as their shrieks  
Ran highest up the gamut, that great wave  
Returning, while none mark'd it, on the crowd  
Broke, mixt with awful light, and show'd their eyes  
Glaring, and passionate looks, and swept away  
The men of flesh and blood, and men of stone,  
To the waste deeps together.

‘Then I fixt

My wistful eyes on two fair images,  
Both crown'd with stars and high among the stars, —  
The Virgin Mother standing with her child  
High up on one of those dark minster-fronts —

Till she began to totter, and the child  
 Clung to the mother, and sent out a cry  
 Which mixt with little Margaret's, and I woke,  
 And my dream awed me : — well — but what are dreams ?  
 Yours came but from the breaking of a glass,  
 And mine but from the crying of a child.'

'Child ? No !' said he, 'but this tide's roar, and his,  
 Our Boanerges with his threats of doom,  
 And loud-lung'd Antibabylonianisms  
 (Altho' I grant but little music there)  
 Went both to make your dream : but if there were  
 A music harmonizing our wild cries,  
 Sphere-music such as that you dream'd about,  
 Why, that would make our passions far too like  
 The discords dear to the musician. No —  
 One shriek of hate would jar all the hymns of heaven :  
 True Devils with no ear, they howl in tune  
 With nothing but the Devil !'

“ True ” indeed !

One of our town, but later by an hour  
 Here than ourselves, spoke with me on the shore ;  
 While you were running down the sands, and made  
 The dimpled flounce of the sea-furbelow flap,  
 Good man, to please the child. She brought strange  
 news.

Why were you silent when I spoke to-night ?  
 I had set my heart on your forgiving him  
 Before you knew. We *must* forgive the dead.'

'Dead ! who is dead ?'

'The man your eye pursued.

A little after you had parted with him,  
He suddenly dropt dead of heart-disease.'

'Dead? he? of heart-disease? what heart had he  
To die of? dead!'

'Ah, dearest, if there be  
A devil in man, there is an angel too,  
And if he did that wrong you charge him with,  
His angel broke his heart. But your rough voice  
(You spoke so loud) has roused the child again.  
Sleep, little birdie, sleep! will she not sleep  
Without her "little birdie?" well then, sleep,  
And I will sing you "birdie."'

Saying this,  
The woman half turn'd round from him she loved,  
Left him one hand, and reaching thro' the night  
Her other, found (for it was close beside) -  
And half embraced the basket cradle-head  
With one soft arm, which, like the pliant bough  
That moving moves the nest and nestling, sway'd  
The cradle, while she sang this baby song.

What does little birdie say  
In her nest at peep of day?  
Let me fly, says little birdie,  
Mother, let me fly away.  
Birdie, rest a little longer,  
Till the little wings are stronger.  
So she rests a little longer,  
Then she flies away.

What does little baby say,  
In her bed at peep of day?



Baby says, like little birdie,  
Let me rise and fly away.  
Baby, sleep a little longer,  
Till the little limbs are stronger.  
If she sleeps a little longer,  
Baby too shall fly away.

‘She sleeps : let us too, let all evil, sleep.  
He also sleeps — another sleep than ours.  
He can do no more wrong : forgive him, dear,  
And I shall sleep the sounder !’

Then the man,  
‘His deeds yet live, the worst is yet to come.  
Yet let your sleep for this one night be sound :  
I do forgive him !’

‘Thanks, my love,’ she said,  
‘Your own will be the sweeter,’ and they slept.

## THE GRANDMOTHER.

## I.

AND Willy, my eldest-born, is gone, you say, little  
Anne ?

Ruddy and white, and strong on his legs, he looks like  
a man.

And Willy’s wife has written : she never was over-  
wise,

Never the wife for Willy : he would n’t take my advice.

## II.

For, Annie, you see, her father was not the man to  
save,  
Had n't a head to manage, and drank himself into his  
grave.  
Pretty enough, very pretty ! but I was against it for  
one.  
Eh ! — but he would n't hear me — and Willy, you say,  
is gone.

## III.

Willy, my beauty, my eldest-born, the flower of the  
flock ;  
Never a man could fling him : for Willy stood like a  
rock.  
' Here 's a leg for a baby of a week ! ' says doctor ; and  
he would be bound,  
There was not his like that year in twenty parishes  
round.

## IV.

Strong of his hands, and strong on his legs, but still of  
his tongue !  
I ought to have gone before him : I wonder he went  
so young.  
I cannot cry for him, Annie : I have not long to stay ;  
Perhaps I shall see him the sooner, for he lived far  
away.

## V.

Why do you look at me, Annie ? you think I am hard  
and cold ;  
But all my children have gone before me, I am so old :  
I cannot weep for Willy, nor can I weep for the rest ;  
Only at your age, Annie, I could have wept with the  
best.

## VI.

For I remember a quarrel I had with your father, my  
dear,  
All for a slanderous story, that cost me many a tear.  
I mean your grandfather, Annie : it cost me a world  
of woe,  
Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago.

## VII.

For Jenny, my cousin, had come to the place, and I  
knew right well  
That Jenny had tript in her time : I knew, but I would  
not tell.  
And she to be coming and slandering me, the base  
little liar !  
But the tongue is a fire as you know, my dear, the  
tongue is a fire.

## VIII.

And the parson made it his text that week, and he said  
likewise,  
That a lie which is half a truth is ever the blackest of  
lies,  
That a lie which is all a lie may be met and fought  
with outright,  
But a lie which is part a truth is a harder matter to  
fight.

## IX.

And Willy had not been down to the farm for a week  
and a day ;  
And all things look'd half-dead, tho' it was the middle  
of May.

Jenny, to slander me, who knew what Jenny had been !  
But soiling another, Annie, will never make oneself  
clean.

## X.

And I cried myself well-nigh blind, and all of an even-  
ing late  
I climb'd to the top of the garth, and stood by the road  
at the gate.  
The moon like a rick on fire was rising over the dale,  
And whit, whit, whit, in the bush beside me chirrup  
the nightingale.

## I.

All of a sudden he stopt : there past by the gate of the  
farm,  
Willy, — he did n't see me, — and Jenny hung on his arm.  
Out into the road I started, and spoke I scarce knew  
how ;  
Ah, there's no fool like the old one — it makes me  
angry now.

## XII.

Willy stood up like a man, and look'd the thing that  
he meant ;  
Jenny, the viper, made me a mocking courtesy and  
went.  
And I said, ' Let us part : in a hundred years it 'll all  
be the same,  
You cannot love me at all, if you love not my good  
name.'

## XIII.

And he turn'd, and I saw his eyes all wet, in the sweet  
moonshine :  
' Sweetheart, I love you so well that your good name is  
mine.

And what do I care for Jane, let her speak of you well  
or ill ;  
But marry me out of hand : we too shall be happy  
still.'

## XIV.

'Marry you, Willy !' said I, 'but I needs must speak  
my mind,  
And I fear you'll listen to tales, be jealous and hard  
and unkind.'  
But he turn'd and claspt me in his arms, and answer'd,  
'No, love, no ;'  
Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago.

## XV.

So Willy and I were wedded : I wore a lilac gown ;  
And the ringers rang with a will, and he gave the  
ringers a crown.  
But the first that ever I bare was dead before he was born,  
Shadow and shine is life, little Annie, flower and thorn.

## XVI.

That was the first time, too, that ever I thought of death.  
There lay the sweet little body that never had drawn  
a breath.  
I had not wept, little Anne, not since I had been a wife ;  
But I wept like a child that day, for the babe had  
fought for his life.

## XVII.

His dear little face was troubled, as if with anger or  
pain :  
I look'd at the still little body — his trouble had all  
been in vain.

For Willy I cannot weep, I shall see him another  
morn :

But I wept like a child for the child that was dead  
before he was born.

## XVIII.

But he cheer'd me, my good man, for he seldom said  
me nay :

Kind, like a man, was he ; like a man, too, would have  
his way :

Never jealous — not he : we had many a happy year ;  
And he died, and I could not weep — my own time  
seem'd so near.

## XIX.

But I wish'd it had been God's will that I, too, then  
could have died :

I began to be tired a little, and fain had slept at his  
side.

And that was ten years back, or more, if I don't forget :  
But as to the children, Annie, they 're all about me yet.

## XX.

Pattering over the boards, my Annie who left me at two,  
Patter she goes, my own little Annie, an Annie like you :  
Pattering over the boards, she comes and goes at her  
will,

While Harry is in the five-acre and Charlie ploughing  
the hill.

## XXI.

And Harry and Charlie, I hear them too — they sing  
to their team :

Often they come to the door in a pleasant kind of a  
dream.

They come and sit by my chair, they hover about my  
bed —

I am not always certain if they be alive or dead.

## XXII.

And yet I know for a truth, there's none of them left  
alive ;

For Harry went at sixty, your father at sixty-five :

And Willy, my eldest born, at nigh threescore and ten ;

I knew them all as babies, and now they're elderly  
men.

## XXIII.

For mine is a time of peace, it is not often I grieve ;

I am oftener sitting at home in my father's farm at  
eve :

And the neighbors come and laugh and gossip, and so  
do I ;

I find myself often laughing at things that have long  
gone by.

## XXIV.

To be sure the preacher says, our sins should make  
us sad :

But mine is a time of peace, and there is Grace to  
be had ;

And God, not man, is the Judge of us all when life  
shall cease ;

And in this Book, little Annie, the message is one of  
Peace.

## XXV.

And age is a time of peace, so it be free from pain,

And happy has been my life ; but I would not live it  
again.

I seem to be tired a little, that 's all, and long for rest ;  
Only at your age, Annie, I could have wept with the  
best.

## XXVI.

So Willy has gone, my beauty, my eldest-born, my  
flower ;  
But how can I weep for Willy, he has but gone for an  
hour, —  
Gone for a minute, my son, from this room into the  
next ;  
I, too, shall go in a minute. What time have I to be  
vext ?

## XXVII.

And Willy's wife has written, she never was over-wise.  
Get me my glasses, Annie : thank God that I keep my  
eyes.  
There is but a trifle left you, when I shall have past  
away.  
But stay with the old woman now : you cannot have  
long to stay.

## NORTHERN FARMER.

## OLD STYLE.

## I.

W<sup>H</sup>EEER 'asta beän saw long and meä liggin' 'ere  
aloän ?

Noorse ? thoort nowt o' a noorse : whoy, doctor's abeän  
an' agoän :



Says that I moänt 'a naw moor yaäle : but I beänt a fool :

Git ma my yaäle, for I beänt a-gooiñ' to breäk my rule.

## II.

Doctors, they knaws nowt, for a says what's nawways true :

Naw soort o' koind o' use to saäy the things that a do.  
I 've 'ed my point o' yaäle ivry noight sin' I beän 'ere,  
An' I 've 'ed my quart ivry market-noight for foorty year.

## III.

Parson's a beän loikewise, an' a sittin 'ere o' my bed.  
'The amoighty's a taäkin o' you to 'issen, my friend,'  
'a said,

An' a towd ma my sins, an's toithe were due, an' I gied it in hond ;

I done my duty by un, as I 'a done by the lond.

## IV.

Larn'd a ma' beä. I reckons I 'annot sa mooch to larn.  
But a cost oop, thot a did, 'boot Bessy Marris's barn.  
Thof a knaws I hallus voäted wi' Squoire an' choorch  
an staäte,

An' i' the woost o' toimes I wur niver agin the raäte.

## V.

An' I hallus comed to 's choorch afoor my Sally wur deäd,

An' 'eerd un a bummin' awaäy loike a buzzard-clock \*  
ower my yeäd,

\* Cockchafer.

An' I niver knaw'd whot a meän'd but I thowt a 'ad  
 summut to saäy,  
 An I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a said an' I comed  
 awaäy.

## VI.

Bessy Marris's barn ! tha knaws she laäid it to meä.  
 Mowt 'a beän, mayhap, for she wur a bad un, sheä.  
 'Siver, I kep un, I kep un, my lass, tha mun understand ;  
 I done my duty by un as I 'a done by the lond.

## VII.

But Parson a comes an' a goos, an' a says it eäsy an'  
 freeä  
 'The amoighty's a taäkin o' you to 'issen, my friend,'  
 says 'eä.  
 I weänt saäy men be loiars, thof summun said it in  
 'aäste :  
 But a reäds wonn sarmin a weeäk, an' I 'a stubb'd  
 Thornaby waäste.

## VIII.

D'ya moind the waäste, my lass ? naw, naw, tha was  
 not born then ;  
 Theer wur a boggle in it, I often 'eerd un mysen ;  
 Moäst loike a butter-bump,\* for I 'eerd un aboot an  
 aboot,  
 But I stubb'd un oop wi' the lot, and raäved an'  
 rembled un oot.

## IX.

Keäper's it wur ; fo' they fun un theer a laäid on 'is  
 faäce  
 Doon i' the woild 'enemies† afoor I comed to the  
 plaäce.

Noäks or Thimbleby — toner 'ed shot an as deäd as  
a naäil.

Noaks wur 'ang'd for it oop at 'soize — but git ma  
my yaäle.

## X.

Dubbut looäk at the waäste: theer warn't not feäd  
for a cow;

Nowt at all but bracken an' fuzz, an' looäk at it  
now —

Warn't worth nowt a haäcre, an' now theer's lots o'  
feäd,

Fourscore yows upon it an' some on it doon in  
seäd.

## XI.

Nobbut a bit on it's left, an' I mean'd to a' stubb'd  
it at fall,

Done it ta-year I meän'd, an' runn'd plow thruff it  
an' all,

If godamoighty an' parson 'ud nobbut let ma aloän,  
Meä, wi' haäte oonderd haäcre o' Squire's an' loäd o'  
my oän.

## XII.

Do godamoighty know what a's doing a-taäkin' o'  
meä?

I beänt wonn as saws 'ere a beän an' yonder a peä;

An' Squire 'ull be sa mad an' all — a' dear a' dear!

And I 'a monaged for Squire coäme Michaelmas  
thirty year.

## XIII.

A mowt 'a taäken Joänes, as 'ant a 'aäpoth o' sense,

Or a mowt 'a taäken Robins — a niver mended a  
fence:

But godamoighty a moost taäke meä an' taäke ma  
 now  
 Wi 'auf the cows to cauve an' Thornaby holms to  
 plow !

## XIV.

Looäk 'ow quoloty smoiles when they sees ma a  
 passin' by,  
 Says to thessen naw doot 'what a mon a be sew-  
 er-ly !'  
 For they knaws what I beän to Squire sin fust a  
 comed to the 'All ;  
 I done my duty by Squire an' I done my duty by  
 all.

## XV.

Squire's in Lunnon, an' summun I reckons 'ull 'a to  
 wroite,  
 For who's to howd the lond ater meä thot muddles  
 ma quoit ;  
 Sartin-sewer I beä, thot a weänt niver give it to  
 Joänes,  
 Noither a moänt to Robins — a niver rembles the  
 stoäns.

## XVI.

But summun 'ull come ater meä mayhap wi' 'is kittle  
 o' steäm  
 Huzzin' an' maäzin' the blessed feälds wi' the Divil's  
 oän teäm.  
 Gin I mun doy I mun doy, an' loife they says is  
 sweet,  
 But gin I mun doy I mun doy, for I couldn abear to  
 see it.

## . XVII.

What atta stannin' theer for, an' doesn bring ma the  
 yaäle?  
 Doctor's a 'tottler, lass, and a's hallus i' the owd  
 taäle;  
 I weänt breäk rules for Doctor, a knaws naw moor  
 nor a floy;  
 Git ma my yaäle I tell tha, an' gin I mun doy I mun  
 doy.

## T I T H O N U S .

THE woods decay, the woods decay and fall,  
 The vapors weep their burthen to the ground,  
 Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,  
 And after many a summer dies the swan.  
 Me only cruel immortality  
 Consumes: I wither slowly in thine arms,  
 Here at the quiet limit of the world,  
 A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a dream  
 The ever silent spaces of the East,  
 Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn.  
 Alas! for this gray shadow, once a man —  
 So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,  
 Who madest him thy chosen, that he seem'd  
 To his great heart none other than a God!  
 I ask'd thee, 'Give me immortality.'  
 Then didst thou grant mine asking with a smile,  
 Like wealthy men who care not how they give.  
 But thy strong Hours indignant work'd their wills,

And beat me down and marr'd and wasted me,  
And tho' they could not end me, left me maim'd  
To dwell in presence of immortal youth,  
Immortal age beside immortal youth,  
And all I was, in ashes. Can thy love,  
Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even now,  
Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,  
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with tears  
To hear me ? Let me go : take back thy gift :  
Why should a man desire in any way  
To vary from the kindly race of men,  
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance  
Where all should pause, as is most meet for all ?

A soft air fans the cloud apart ; there comes  
A glimpse of that dark world where I was born.  
Once more the old mysterious glimmer steals  
From thy pure brows, and from thy shoulders pure,  
And bosom beating with a heart renew'd.  
Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the gloom,  
Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to mine,  
Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild team  
Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke, arise,  
And shake the darkness from their loosen'd manes,  
And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

Lo ! ever thus thou growest beautiful  
In silence, then before thine answer given  
Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy tears,  
And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,  
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true ?  
'The Gods themselves cannot recall their gifts.'

Ay me ! ay me ! with what another heart  
In days far-off, and with what other eyes  
I used to watch — if I be he that watch'd —  
The lucid outline forming round thee ; saw  
The dim curls kindle into sunny rings ;  
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt my blood  
Glow with the glow that slowly crimson'd all  
Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,  
Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-warm  
With kisses balmier than half-opening buds  
Of April, and could hear the lips that kiss'd  
Whispering I knew not what of wild and sweet,  
Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,  
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine East :  
How can my nature longer mix with thine ?  
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold  
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet  
Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the steam  
Floats up from those dim fields about the homes  
Of happy men that have the power to die,  
And grassy barrows of the happier dead.  
Release me, and restore me to the ground ;  
Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my grave :  
Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn ;  
I earth in earth forget these empty courts,  
And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

X  
*Hy Siegwink comments & J. H. Green:*  
*"The epilogue speaks" I.*

## THE VOYAGE.

WE left behind the painted buoy  
 That tosses at the harbor-mouth ;  
 And madly danced our hearts with joy,  
 As fast we fled to the South :  
 How fresh was every sight and sound  
 On open main or winding shore !  
 We knew the merry world was round,  
 And we might sail for evermore.

## II.

Warm broke the breeze against the brow,  
 Dry sang the tackle, sang the sail :  
 The Lady's-head upon the prow  
 Caught the shrill salt, and sheer'd the gale.  
 The broad seas swell'd to meet the keel,  
 And swept behind : so quick the run,  
 We felt the good ship shake and reel,  
 We seem'd to sail into the Sun !

## III.

How oft we saw the Sun retire,  
 And burn the threshold of the night,  
 Fall from his Ocean-lane of fire,  
 And sleep beneath his pillar'd light !  
 How oft the purple-skirted robe  
 Of twilight slowly downward drawn,  
 As thro' the slumber of the globe  
 Again we dash'd into the dawn !



## IV.

New stars all night above the brim  
Of waters lighten'd into view ;  
They climb'd as quickly, for the rim  
Changed every moment as we flew.  
Far ran the naked moon across  
The houseless ocean's heaving field,  
Or flying shone, the silver boss  
Of her own halo's dusky shield ;

## V.

The peaky islet shifted shapes,  
High towns on hills were dimly seen,  
We past long lines of Northern capes  
And dewy Northern meadows green.  
We came to warmer waves, and deep  
Across the boundless east we drove,  
Where those long swells of breaker sweep  
The nutmeg rocks and isles of clove.

## VI.

By peaks that flamed, or, all in shade,  
Gloom'd the low coast and quivering brine  
With ashy rains, that spreading made  
Fantastic plume or sable pine ;  
By sands and steaming flats, and floods  
Of mighty mouth, we scudded fast,  
And hills and scarlet-mingled woods  
Glow'd for a moment as we past.

## VII.

O hundred shores of happy climes,  
How swiftly stream'd ye by the bark !

At times the whole sea burn'd, at times  
With wakes of fire we tore the dark ;  
At times a carven craft would shoot  
From havens hid in fairy bowers,  
With naked limbs and flowers and fruit,  
But we nor paused for fruit nor flowers.

## VIII.

For one fair Vision ever fled  
Down the waste waters day and night,  
And still we follow'd where she led,  
In hope to gain upon her flight.  
Her face was evermore unseen,  
And fixt upon the far sea-line ;  
But each man murmur'd ' O my Queen,  
I follow till I make thee mine. '

## IX.

And now we lost her, now she gleam'd  
Like Fancy made of golden air,  
Now nearer to the prow she seem'd  
Like Virtue firm, like Knowledge fair,  
Now high on waves that idly burst  
Like Heavenly Hope she crown'd the sea,  
And now, the bloodless point reversed,  
She bore the blade of Liberty.

## X.

And only one among us — him  
We pleased not — he was seldom pleased :  
He saw not far : his eyes were dim :  
But ours he swore were all diseased.

‘A ship of fools’ he shriek’d in spite,  
‘A ship of fools’ he sneer’d and wept.  
And overboard one stormy night  
He cast his body, and on we swept.

XI.

And never sail of ours was furl’d,  
Nor anchor dropt at eve or morn ;  
We loved the glories of the world,  
But laws of nature were our scorn ;  
For blasts would rise and rave and cease,  
But whence were those that drove the sail  
Across the whirlwind’s heart of peace,  
And to and thro’ the counter-gale ?

XII.

Again to colder climes we came,  
For still we follow’d where she led :  
Now mate is blind and captain lame,  
And half the crew are sick or dead.  
But blind or lame or sick or sound  
We follow that which flies before :  
We know the merry world is round,  
And we may sail for evermore.

*IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ.*

ALL along the valley, stream that flashest white,  
Deepening thy voice with the deepening of the night,  
All along the valley, where thy waters flow,  
I walk’d with one I loved two and thirty years ago.

All along the valley while I walk'd to-day,  
The two and thirty years were a mist that rolls away ;  
For all along the valley, down thy rocky bed  
Thy living voice to me was as the voice of the dead,  
And all along the valley, by rock and cave and tree,  
The voice of the dead was a living voice to me.



## THE FLOWER.

ONCE in a golden hour  
I cast to earth a seed.  
Up there came a flower,  
The people said, a weed.

To and fro they went  
Thro' my garden-bower,  
And muttering discontent  
Cursed me and my flower.

Then it grew so tall  
It wore a crown of light,  
But thieves from o'er the wall  
Stole the seed by night.

Sow'd it far and wide  
By every town and tower,  
Till all the people cried  
' Splendid is the flower.'

Read my little fable :  
He that runs may read.  
Most can raise the flowers now,  
For all have got the seed.

And some are pretty enough,  
And some are poor indeed ;  
And now again the people  
Call it but a weed.

REQUIESCAT.

FAIR is her cottage in its place,  
Where yon broad water sweetly slowly glides.  
It sees itself from thatch to base  
Dream in the sliding tides.

And fairer she, but ah how soon to die !  
Her quiet dream of life this hour may cease.  
Her peaceful being slowly passes by  
To some more perfect peace.

THE SAILOR-BOY.

HE rose at dawn and, fired with hope,  
Shot o'er the seething harbor-bar,  
And reach'd the ship and caught the rope,  
And whistled to the morning star.

And while he whistled long and loud  
He heard a fierce mermaiden cry,  
'O Boy, tho' thou art young and proud,  
I see the place where thou wilt lie.

‘ The sands and yeasty surges mix  
In caves about the dreary bay,  
And on thy ribs the limpet sticks,  
And in thy heart the scrawl shall play.’

‘ Fool,’ he answer’d, ‘ death is sure  
To those that stay and those that roam,  
But I will nevermore endure  
To sit with empty hands at home.

‘ My mother clings about my neck,  
My sisters crying “ stay for shame ; ”  
My father raves of death and wreck,  
They are all to blame, they are all to blame.

‘ God help me ! save I take my part  
Of danger on the roaring sea,  
A devil rises in my heart,  
Far worse than any death to me.’

## THE ISLET.

‘ **W**HITHER O whither love shall we go,  
For a score of sweet little summers or so’  
The sweet little wife of the singer said,  
On the day that follow’d the day she was wed,  
‘ Whither O whither love shall we go ?’  
And the singer shaking his curly head  
Turn’d as he sat, and struck the keys  
There at his right with a sudden crash,  
Singing, ‘ and shall it be over the seas  
With a crew that is neither rude nor rash,

But a bevy of Eroses apple-cheek'd,  
In a shallop of crystal ivory-beak'd,  
With a satin sail of a ruby glow,  
To a sweet little Eden on earth that I know,  
A mountain islet pointed and peak'd ;  
Waves on a diamond shingle dash,  
Cataract brooks to the ocean run,  
Fairily-delicate palaces shine  
Mixt with myrtle and clad with vine,  
And overstream'd and silvery-streak'd  
With many a rivulet high against the Sun  
The facets of the glorious mountain flash  
Above the valleys of palm and pine.'

' Thither O thither, love, let us go.'

' No, no, no !

For in all that exquisite isle, my dear,  
There is but one bird with a musical throat,  
And his compass is but of a single note,  
That it makes one weary to hear.'  
' Mock me not ! mock me not ! love, let us go.'

' No, love, no.

For the bud ever breaks into bloom on the tree,  
And a storm never wakes on the lonely sea,  
And a worm is there in the lonely wood,  
That pierces the liver and blackens the blood,  
And makes it a sorrow to be.'



## THE RINGLET.

‘YOUR ringlets, your ringlets,  
That look so golden-gay,  
If you will give me one, but one,  
To kiss it night and day,  
Then never chilling touch of Time  
Will turn it silver-gray ;  
And then shall I know it is all true gold  
To flame and sparkle and stream as of old,  
Till all the comets in heaven are cold,  
And all her stars decay.’  
‘Then take it, love, and put it by ;  
This cannot change, nor yet can I.’

## 2.

‘My ringlet, my ringlet,  
That art so golden-gay,  
Now never chilling touch of Time  
Can turn thee silver-gray ;  
And a lad may wink, and a girl may hint,  
And a fool may say his say ;  
For my doubts and fears were all amiss,  
And I swear henceforth by this and this,  
That a doubt will only come for a kiss,  
And a fear to be kiss’d away.’  
‘Then kiss it, love, and put it by :  
If this can change, why so can I.’

## II.

O Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
I kiss’d you night and day,



And Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
    You still are golden-gay,  
But Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
    You should be silver-gray :  
For what is this which now I'm told,  
I that took you for true gold,  
She that gave you 's bought and sold,  
    Sold, sold.

## 2.

O Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
    She blush'd a rosy red,  
When Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
    She clipt you from her head,  
And Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
    She gave you me, and said,  
'Come, kiss it, love, and put it by :  
If this can change, why so can I.'  
O fie, you golden nothing, fie  
    You golden lie.

## 3.

O Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
    I count you much to blame,  
For Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
    You put me much to shame,  
So Ringlet, O Ringlet,  
    I doom you to the flame.  
For what is this which now I learn,  
Has given all my faith a turn ?  
Burn, you glossy heretic, burn,  
    Burn, burn.

## A WELCOME TO ALEXANDRA.

MARCH 7, 1863.

SEA-KINGS' daughter from over the sea,  
Alexandra !

Saxon and Norman and Dane are we,  
But all of us Danes in our welcome of thee,  
Alexandra !

Welcome her, thunders of fort and of fleet !  
Welcome her, thundering cheer of the street !  
Welcome her, all things youthful and sweet,  
Scatter the blossom under her feet !  
Break, happy land, into earlier flowers !  
Make music, O bird, in the new-budded bowers !  
Blazon your mottos of blessing and prayer !  
Welcome her, welcome her, all that is ours !  
Warble, O bugle, and trumpet, blare !  
Flags, flutter out upon turrets and towers !  
Flames, on the windy headland flare !  
Utter your jubilee, steeple and spire !  
Clash, ye bells, in the merry March air !  
Flash, ye cities, in rivers of fire !  
Rush to the roof, sudden rocket, and higher  
Melt into the stars for the land's desire !  
Roll and rejoice, jubilant voice,  
Roll as a ground-swell dash'd on the strand,  
Roar as the sea when he welcomes the land,  
And welcome her, welcome the land's desire,  
The sea-kings' daughter as happy as fair,  
Blissful bride of a blissful heir,  
Bride of the heir of the kings of the sea —

O joy to the people, and joy to the throne,  
Come to us, love us, and make us your own :  
For Saxon or Dane or Norman we,  
Teuton or Celt, or whatever we be,  
We are each all Dane in our welcome of thee,  
Alexandra !

ODE SUNG AT THE OPENING OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION.

UPLIFT a thousand voices full and sweet,  
In this wide hall with earth's inventions stored,  
And praise th' invisible universal Lord,  
Who lets once more in peace the nations meet,  
Where Science, Art, and Labor have outpour'd  
Their myriad horns of plenty at our feet.

O silent father of our Kings to be  
Mourn'd in this golden hour of jubilee,  
For this, for all, we weep our thanks to thee !

The world-compelling plan was thine,  
And, lo ! the long laborious miles  
Of Palace ; lo ! the giant aisles,  
Rich in model and design ;  
Harvest-tool and husbandry,  
Loom and wheel and engin'ry,  
Secrets of the sullen mine,  
Steel and gold, and corn and wine,  
Fabric rough, or Fairy fine,  
Sunny tokens of the Line,

Polar marvels, and a feast  
Of wonder, out of West and East,  
And shapes and hues of Part divine !  
All of beauty, all of use,  
That one fair planet can produce.  
Brought from under every star,  
Blown from over every main,  
And mixt, as life is mixt with pain,  
The works of peace with works of war.

O ye, the wise who think, the wise who reign,  
From growing commerce loose her latest chain,  
And let the fair white-winged peacemaker fly  
To happy havens under all the sky,  
And mix the seasons and the golden hours,  
Till each man finds his own in all men's good,  
And all men work in noble brotherhood,  
Breaking their mailed fleets and armed towers,  
And ruling by obeying Nature's powers,  
And gathering all the fruits of peace and crown'd  
with all her flowers.

## A DEDICATION.

DEAR, near and true — no truer Time himself  
Can prove you, tho' he make you evermore  
Dearer and nearer, as the rapid of life  
Shoots to the fall — take this, and pray that he,  
Who wrote it, honoring your sweet faith in him,  
May trust himself ; and spite of praise and scorn,  
As one who feels the immeasurable world,

Attain the wise indifference of the wise ;  
And after Autumn past — if left to pass  
His autumn into seeming-leafless days —  
Draw toward the long frost and longest night,  
Wearing his wisdom lightly, like the fruit  
Which in our winter woodland looks a flower.\*

## THE CAPTAIN.

## A LEGEND OF THE NAVY.

HE that only rules by terror  
Doeth grievous wrong.  
Deep as Hell I count his error,  
Let him hear my song.  
Brave the Captain was : the seamen  
Made a gallant crew,  
Gallant sons of English freemen,  
Sailors bold and true.  
But they hated his oppression,  
Stern he was and rash ;  
So for every light transgression  
Doom'd them to the lash.  
Day by day more harsh and cruel  
Seem'd the Captain's mood.  
Secret wrath like smother'd fuel  
Burnt in each man's blood.  
Yet he hoped to purchase glory,  
Hoped to make the name

\* The fruit of the Spindle-tree (*Euonymus Europæus*.)

Of his vessel great in story,  
Wheresoe'er he came.  
So they past by capes and islands,  
Many a harbor-mouth,  
Sailing under palmy highlands  
Far within the South.  
On a day when they were going  
O'er the lone expanse,  
In the North, her canvas flowing,  
Rose a ship of France.  
Then the Captain's color heighten'd,  
Joyful came his speech :  
But a cloudy gladness lighten'd  
In the eyes of each.  
"Chase," he said : the ship flew forward,  
And the wind did blow ;  
Stately, lightly, went she Norward,  
Till she near'd the foe.  
Then they look'd at him they hated,  
Had what they desired :  
Mute with folded arms they waited—  
Not a gun was fired.  
But they heard the foeman's thunder  
Roaring out their doom ;  
All the air was torn in sunder,  
Crashing went the boom,  
Spars were splinter'd, decks were shatter'd,  
Bullets fell like rain ;  
Over mast and deck were scatter'd  
Blood and brains of men.  
Spars were splinter'd ; decks were broken :  
Every mother's son—  
Down they dropt—no word was spoken—  
Each beside his gun.

On the decks as they were lying,  
Were their faces grim.  
In their blood, as they lay dying,  
Did they smile on him.  
Those, in whom he had reliance  
For his noble name,  
With one smile of still defiance  
Sold him unto shame.  
Shame and wrath his heart confounded,  
Pale he turn'd and red,  
Till himself was deadly wounded  
Falling on the dead.  
Dismal error! fearful slaughter!  
Years have wander'd by,  
Side by side beneath the water  
Crew and Captain lie ;  
There the sunlit ocean tosses  
O'er them mouldering,  
And the lonely seabird crosses  
With one waft of the wing.

THREE SONNETS TO A COQUETTE.

CARESS'D or chidden by the dainty hand,  
And singing airy trifles this or that,  
Light Hope at Beauty's call would perch and stand,  
And run thro' every change of sharp and flat ;  
And Fancy came and at her pillow sat,  
When Sleep had bound her in his rosy band,  
And chased away the still-recurring gnat,  
And woke her with a lay from fairy land.

But now they live with Beauty less and less,  
 For Hope is other Hope and wanders far,  
 Nor cares to lisp in love's delicious creeds ;  
 And Fancy watches in the wilderness,  
 Poor Fancy sadder than a single star,  
 That sets at twilight in a land of reeds.

## 2.

The form, the form alone is eloquent !  
 A nobler yearning never broke her rest  
 Than but to dance and sing, be gayly drest,  
 And win all eyes with all accomplishment :  
 Yet in the waltzing-circle as we went,  
 My fancy made me for a moment blest  
 To find my heart so near the beauteous breast  
 That once had power to rob it of content.  
 A moment came the tenderness of tears,  
 The phantom of a wish that once could move,  
 A ghost of passion that no smiles restore —  
 For ah ! the slight coquette, she cannot love,  
 And if you kiss'd her feet a thousand years,  
 She still would take the praise, and care no more.

## 3.

Wan Sculptor weepst thou to take the cast  
 Of those dead lineaments that near thee lie ?  
 O sorrowest thou, pale Painter, for the past,  
 In painting some dead friend from memory ?  
 Weep on : beyond his object Love can last :  
 His object lives : more cause to weep have I :  
 My tears, no tears of love, are flowing fast,  
 No tears of love, but tears that Love can die.  
 I pledge her not in any cheerful cup,  
 Nor care to sit beside her where she sits —



Ah pity — hint it not in human tones,  
 But breathe it into earth and close it up  
 With secret death forever, in the pits  
 Which some green Christmas crams with weary  
     bones.

## ON A MOURNER.

NATURE, so far as in her lies,  
     Imitates God, and turns her face  
 To every land beneath the skies,  
     Counts nothing that she meets with base,  
     But lives and loves in every place ;

## 2.

Fills out the homely quick-set screens,  
     And makes the purple lilac ripe,  
 Steps from her airy hill, and greens  
     The swamp, where hums the dropping snipe,  
     With moss and braided marish-pipe ;

## 3.

And on thy heart a finger lays,  
     Saying, 'beat quicker, for the time  
 Is pleasant, and the woods and ways  
     Are pleasant, and the beech and lime  
     Put forth and feel a gladder clime.'

## 4.

And murmurs of a deeper voice,  
     Going before to some far shrine,

Teach that sick heart the stronger choice,  
Till all thy life one way incline  
With one wide will that closes thine.

## 5.

And when the zoning eve has died  
Where yon dark valleys wind forlorn,  
Come Hope and Memory, spouse and bride,  
From out the borders of the morn,  
With that fair child betwixt them born.

## 6.

And when no mortal motion jars  
The blackness round the tombing sod,  
Thro' silence and the trembling stars  
Comes Faith from tracts no feet have trod,  
And Virtue, like a household god

## 7.

Promising empire; such as those  
That once at dead of night did greet  
Troy's wandering prince, so that he rose  
With sacrifice, while all the fleet  
Had rest by stony hills of Crete.

## SONG.

LADY, let the rolling drums  
Beat to battle where thy warrior stands :  
Now thy face across his fancy comes,  
And gives the battle to his hands.

Lady, let the trumpets blow,  
Clasp thy little babes about thy knee :  
Now their warrior father meets the foe,  
And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

## SONG.

HOME they brought him slain with spears.  
They brought him home at even-fall :  
All alone she sits and hears  
Echoes in his empty hall,  
Sounding on the morrow.

The Sun peep'd in from open field,  
The boy began to leap and prance,  
Rode upon his father's lance,  
Beat upon his father's shield —  
“ O hush, my joy, my sorrow.”





## EXPERIMENTS.



### BOÄDICEA.

WHILE about the shore of Mona those Neronian  
legionaries  
Burnt and broke the grove and altar of the Druid and  
Druidess,  
Far in the East Boädicéa, standing loftily charioted,  
Mad and maddening all that heard her in her fierce  
volubility,  
Girt by half the tribes of Britain, near the colony  
Cámulodúne,  
Yell'd and shriek'd between her daughters o'er a wild  
confederacy.

‘They that scorn the tribes and call us Britain’s  
barbarous populaces,  
Did they hear me, would they listen, did they pity me  
supplicating ?  
Shall I heed them in their anguish ? shall I brook to be  
supplicated ?  
Hear Icenian, Catieuchlanian, hear Coritanian, Trino-  
bant !

Must their ever-ravening eagle's beak and talon annihilate us?  
Tear the noble heart of Britain, leave it gorily quivering?  
Bark an answer, Britain's raven! bark and blacken innumerable,  
Blacken round the Roman carrion, make the carcase a skeleton,  
Kite and kestrel, wolf and wolf kin, from the wilderness, wallow in it,  
Till the face of Bel be brighten'd, Taranis be propitiated.  
Lo their colony half-defended! lo their colony, Cámulodúne!  
There the horde of Roman robbers mock at a barbarous adversary.  
There the hive of Roman liars worship a gluttonous emperor-idiot.  
Such is Rome, and this her deity: hear it, Spirit of Cássivëlaún!

‘Hear it, Gods! the Gods have heard it, O Icenian,  
O Coritanian!  
Doubt not ye the Gods have answer'd, Catieuchlanian,  
Trinobant.  
These have told us all their anger in miraculous utterances,  
Thunder, a flying fire in heaven, a murmur heard aërially,  
Phantom sound of blows descending, moan of an enemy massacred,  
Phantom wail of women and children, multitudinous agonies.  
Bloodily flow'd the Tamesa rolling phantom bodies of horses and men;

Then a phantom colony smoulder'd on the refluent  
estuary ;  
Lastly yonder yester-even, suddenly giddily totter-  
ing —  
There was one who watch'd and told me — down their  
statue of Victory fell.  
Lo their precious Roman bantling, lo the colony Cámu-  
lodúne,  
Shall we teach it a Roman lesson ? shall we care to be  
pitiful ?  
Shall we deal with it as an infant ? shall we dandle it  
amorously ?

‘ Hear Icenian, Catieuchlanian, hear Coritanian, Tri-  
nobant !  
While I roved about the forest, long and bitterly medi-  
tating,  
There I heard them in the darkness, at the mystical  
ceremony,  
Loosely robed in flying raiment, sang the terrible  
prophetesses.  
“ Fear not, isle of blowing woodland, isle of silvery  
parapets !  
Tho’ the Roman eagle shadow thee, tho’ the gathering  
enemy narrow thee,  
Thou shalt wax and he shall dwindle, thou shalt be the  
mighty one yet !  
Thine the liberty, thine the glory, thine the deeds to be  
celebrated,  
Thine the myriad-rolling ocean, light and shadow illim-  
itable,  
Thine the lands of lasting summer, many-blossoming  
Paradises,  
Thine the North and thine the South and thine the bat-  
tle-thunder of God.”

So they chanted : how shall Britain light upon auguries  
happier ?

So they chanted in the darkness, and there cometh a  
victory now.

‘ Hear Icenian, Catieuchlanian, hear Coritanian, Tri-  
nobant !

Me the wife of rich Prasutagus, me the lover of lib-  
erty,

Me they seized and me they tortured, me they lash’d  
and humiliated,

Me the sport of ribald Veterans, mine of ruffian vio-  
lators !

See they sit, they hide their faces, miserable in igno-  
miny !

Wherefore in me burns an anger, not by blood to be  
satiated.

Lo the palaces and the temple, lo the colony Cámulo-  
dúne !

There they ruled, and thence they wasted all the flour-  
ishing territory,

Thither at their will they haled the yellow-ringleted  
Britoness —

Bloodily, bloodily fall the battle-axe, unexhausted, inex-  
orable.

Shout Icenian, Catieuchlanian, shout Coritanian, Tri-  
nobant,

Till the victim hear within and yearn to hurry precipi-  
tously

Like the leaf in a roaring whirlwind, like the smoke in  
a hurricane whirl’d.

Lo the colony, there they rioted in the city of Cúno-  
belíne !

There they drank in cups of emerald, there at tables of  
ebony lay,  
Rolling on their purple couches in their tender effemi-  
nacy.  
There they dwelt and there they rioted ; there — there  
— they dwell no more.  
Burst the gates, and burn the palaces, break the works  
of the statuary,  
Take the hoary Roman head and shatter it, hold it  
abominable,  
Cut the Roman boy to pieces in his lust and voluptu-  
ousness,  
Lash the maiden into swooning, me they lash'd and  
humiliated,  
Chop the breasts from off the mother, dash the brains of  
the little one out,  
Up my Britons, on my chariot, on my chargers, trample  
them under us.'

So the Queen Boädicéa, standing loftily charioted,  
Brandishing in her hand a dart and rolling glances  
lioness-like,  
Yell'd and shrieked between her daughters in her fierce  
volubility.  
Till her people all around the royal chariot agitated,  
Madly dash'd the darts together, writhing barbarous  
lineäments,  
Made the noise of frosty woodlands, when they shiver  
in January,  
Roar'd as when the rolling breakers boom and blanch  
on the precipices,  
Yell'd as when the winds of winter tear an oak on a  
promontory.  
So the silent colony hearing her tumultuous adversaries



Clash the darts and on the buckler beat with rapid  
 unanimous hand,  
 Thought on all her evil tyrannies, all her pitiless  
 avarice,  
 Till she felt the heart within her fall and flutter  
 tremulously,  
 Then her pulses at the clamoring of her enemy fainted  
 away.  
 Out of evil evil flourishes, out of tyranny tyranny  
 buds.  
 Ran the land with Roman slaughter, multitudinous  
 agonies.  
 Perish'd many a maid and matron, many a valorous  
 legionary.  
 Fell the colony, city, and citadel, London, Verulam,  
 Cámulodúne.

## IN QUANTITY.

MILTON.

*Alcaics.*

O MIGHTY-MOUTH'D inventor of harmonies,  
 O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,  
 God-gifted organ-voice of England,  
 Milton, a name to resound for ages ;  
 Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,  
 Starr'd from Jehovah's gorgeous armories,  
 Tower, as the deep-domed empyrëan  
 Rings to the roar of an angel onset —

Me rather all that bowery loneliness,  
 The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,  
     And bloom profuse and cedar arches  
     Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,  
 Where some refulgent sunset of India  
 Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean isle,  
     And crimson-hued the stately palmwoods  
     Whisper in odorous heights of even.

*Hendecasyllabics.*

O YOU chorus of indolent reviewers,  
 Irresponsible, indolent reviewers,  
 Look, I come to the test, a tiny poem  
 All composed in a metre of Catullus,  
 All in quantity, careful of my motion,  
 Like the skater on ice that hardly bears him,  
 Lest I fall unawares before the people,  
 Waking laughter in indolent reviewers.  
 Should I flounder awhile without a tumble  
 Thro' this metrification of Catullus,  
 They should speak to me not without a welcome,  
 All that chorus of indolent reviewers.  
 Hard, hard, hard is it, only not to tumble,  
 So fantastical is the dainty metre.  
 Wherefore slight me not wholly, nor believe me  
 Too presumptuous, indolent reviewers.  
 O blatant Magazines, regard me rather —  
 Since I blush to belaud myself a moment —  
 As some rare little rose, a piece of inmost  
 Horticultural art, or half coquette-like  
 Maiden, not to be greeted unbenignly.

SPECIMEN OF A TRANSLATION OF THE ILIAD  
IN BLANK VERSE.

SO Hector said, and sea-like roar'd his host ;  
Then loosed their sweating horses from the yoke  
And each beside his chariot bound his own ;  
And oxen from the city, and goodly sheep  
In haste they drove, and honey-hearted wine  
And bread from out the houses brought, and heap'd  
Their firewood, and the winds from off the plain  
Roll'd the rich vapor far into the heaven.  
And these all night upon the \* bridge of war  
Sat glorying ; many a fire before them blazed :  
As when in heaven the stars about the moon  
Look beautiful, when all the winds are laid,  
And every height comes out, and jutting peak  
And valley, and the immeasurable heavens  
Break open to their highest, and all the stars  
Shine, and the Shepherd gladdens in his heart :  
So many a fire between the ships and stream  
Of Xanthus blazed before the towers of Troy,  
A thousand on the plain ; and close by each  
Sat fifty in the blaze of burning fire ;  
And champing golden grain, the horses stood  
Hard by their chariots, waiting for the dawn.†

*Iliad* VIII. 542 – 561.

\* Or, ridge.

† Or more literally, —

And eating hoary grain and pulse the steeds  
Stood by their cars, waiting the thronéd morn.





